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This dissertation, STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL BAND PROGRAMS, THEIR MARCHING BANDS, AND FACTORS THAT LEAD TO INTENDED ENROLLMENT IN THESE ENSEMBLES, by ADRIAN THOMAS GIBSON, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education and Human Development, Georgia State University. The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

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STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL BAND PROGRAMS, THEIR MARCHING
BANDS, AND FACTORS THAT LEAD TO INTENDED ENROLLMENT IN THESE
ENSEMBLES

by

Adrian Thomas Gibson

Under the Direction of Dr. Patrick K. Freer

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of eighth grade band students about high school band programs and the influence of marching band on their decision to participate in high school band. For this study, the term “high school band program” refers to curricular offerings scheduled during school hours. This is in contrast to “marching bands” which operate beyond school hours and are generally non-curricular. Using quantitative and qualitative data, this study collected students’ perceptions about high school band programs and their marching bands. The study employed a fixed mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The first phase of the research study included a questionnaire administered to eighth grade band students ($N = 282$). Participants were selected from seven middle schools across four different school districts in the southeastern United States. The Perceptions of High School Band

Assessment questionnaire was researcher-created and validated by a pilot study. The questionnaire consisted of Likert-scaled questions measuring the perceptions and intentions of eighth grade band students regarding participation in the middle school band, participation in the high school band program, and participation in the marching band. The quantitative results indicated that a majority of students enjoyed band in middle school, but there were concerns regarding continued band participation in the high school band program and participation in the marching band, including repertoire selection and friend influences. Findings from the quantitative questionnaire helped form the qualitative phase that consisted of two focus groups at each school ($N = 22$). The qualitative findings suggested eighth grade band students viewed participation in the high school band with doubt and concern. This stemmed from several issues, including personal relationships with friends and fellow band members and the time commitment necessary for participation in the high school concert and marching bands. The analysis revealed that 66% percent of students ($N = 169$) surveyed indicated that they intend on participating in the high school band program and that mandatory marching band policies inhibit enrollment in the overall band program. Implications address topics including repertoire selection, relevance, and course scheduling.

INDEX WORDS: Band, Retention, Attrition, Transition, Perceptions, High School, Middle School, Music, Education

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in

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in

the Department of Middle and Secondary Education

in

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Georgia State University

Atlanta, GA
2015

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1 INTRODUCTION

It is Friday night at approximately 7:00 PM. The football teams are warming up on the field with a beautiful sunset in the distance. The aroma of hamburgers, hot dogs, and pizza from the concession stand permeates the air. The rhythmic thunder of the high school band's percussion rumbles in the distance as they begin their entrance to the stadium. It is time for the Friday night football game. The football team, cheerleaders, and marching band have come together to provide a spectacle of entertainment for various parents, students, and community members. This is a typical Friday night in the southeastern United States.

High school band programs are comprised of members who, for the most part, have studied instrumental music in elementary and/or middle school. A typical band program consists of marching band, one or more concert ensembles, and various small ensembles that may include woodwind ensemble, brass ensemble, percussion ensemble, and winter guard. Marching band is arguably the most visible aspect of a high school band program. In many programs, it is the overwhelming emphasis. Concert band rehearses during class time, students receive grades, and its emphasis is on concert performance in formal settings. Marching band is mostly after school, performs many more times a year, and involves movement with music. Some schools have marching band embedded as part of the high school band curriculum; in others, it is a separate, extracurricular activity. There are many variations of marching bands. The two main styles of marching band, each serving a specific audience, are corps-style and show-style. Some marching bands compete against each other. Some only perform at football games. Each band program, and marching band, is unique in its own way, depending on the preference of the band director, administration, parents, students, and communities.

The constant among high school bands, and subsequently marching bands, is the requirement for new students every year to replace those who graduate. These students come primarily from middle school band programs. However, the problem arises when students transition from eighth to ninth grade. This period is the second highest year of attrition in band programs, with the transition between sixth and seventh grade being the highest (Boyle et al., 1995; Hartley, 1991; Humphries, 2012; Klinedinst, 1991; Sandene, 1994). Why do many students decide to quit participating before joining high school band? What role, if any, does marching band play in this decision? Issues of student retention and attrition have concerned band directors for quite some time. However, education in the United States continues to change and evolve. With greater emphasis placed in areas such as the Common Core Standards, STEM programs, new teacher evaluation programs, and increased standardized testing across all grade levels, amongst other changes, band occupies a precarious position in the high school curriculum. Why are students not participating in high school band? Additionally, why *are* they participating? What are their perceptions of the high school band? How do these perceptions affect their decisions regarding participation in band during high school? How, and more importantly, why, has the marching band become the cornerstone of the high school band? Conversely, why are the other parts of the band program relegated to the background?

When directors refer to their band programs, in most cases, two main components are being referenced – the marching band and the concert band(s). Depending on how many students are enrolled in band, there could be more than one concert band under a variety of names, and possibly even two marching bands, one competitive and one noncompetitive. There are major differences in approach to both. However, due to the many performances and demanding

practice schedules, marching band programs tend to dominate the instrumental music offerings in high schools. Previous research suggests that band directors think they are required by parents, students, and administrators to include marching bands in their selection of instrumental ensembles and to have those ensembles participate in competitions with marching bands from other schools (Rogers, 1985). With the stress placed on competition, band directors feel pressured to spend money on supplemental instructors and equipment, time preparing for adjudication, and an entire semester's worth of rehearsal on the preparation of one "show" that is performed identically for the duration of the season. One benefit is that this approach often garners the support of school administrators who place a high value on the positive public relations opportunities afforded by strong marching band programs (Rogers, 1985). Conversely, concert bands draw smaller crowds, perform fewer times a year, and have fewer after-school rehearsals.

Marching bands are expected to perform at most, if not all, football games to entertain the crowd and support the football team. Some band directors and music educators criticize marching band for its perceived lack of musical qualities (Bergee, 1989; Snapp, 1980; Thurmond, 1978). There is contradictory research suggesting performance levels between competitive and noncompetitive band programs. Temple (1973) suggests there are no significant differences between competitive and noncompetitive ensembles of comparable musical achievement levels. However, other research suggested that a primary reason for participation in competitive marching band is the high performance level achieved by the ensemble (Garrison, 1986). Music educators believe that the focus of marching band lies in its extra-musical benefits, not its musical benefits (Bauer, 1983; Bruno, 1989; Cowen, 2006; Garrison, 1986; Goolsby,

1983; Hunt, 1983; Kohn, 1986; Spradling, 1990). While the value of competitive marching band has been critically analyzed and debated, research suggests that students who participate in competition bands have positive attitudes toward competition and prepare extensively for the adjudicated performances (Payne, 1997; Sheldon, 1994). Other research suggests marching band benefits students in multiple ways, both musical and extra-musical (Revelli, 1979; Rogers, 1985; Sheldon, 1994; Wickes, 1978).

A Brief History of Bands in the United States

Bands have a rich tradition in the United States. The instrumental music movement began in the middle of the nineteenth century. Bands began to increase in popularity at the end of the growth of the orchestras and during the rise of the emerging, progressive American public school system (Humphreys, 1989). This led to school bands rising in number across the country in public school curriculums (Humphreys, 1989; Mark & Gary, 2007). School bands were patterned after the popular touring groups of Patrick Gilmore and John Phillip Sousa. Bands differed from the European orchestral tradition in that bands focused on entertainment and showmanship. In Hash's research (as cited in Mark & Gary, 2007), character development, socialization, democratic values, and citizenship were reasons students should be involved in a school band according to philosophers of the early twentieth century. It is interesting to note that the nonmusical reasons for participating in a school band in 1920, as noted by Hash, were similar to the reasons for participation in band in 2015.

Music curricula were a major contributing factor to the growth of bands across the United States (Holz, 1962; Humphreys, 1989). This explosive growth occurred immediately following World War I (Holz, 1962). There were two primary reasons for the growth of the music

curriculum in public schools: to increase the course offerings in high schools and to better meet the needs of society immediately following the war (Holz, 1962; Humphreys, 1989).

Competitions for marching and concert bands began forming as the school band movement spread throughout the United States (Holz, 1962). Marching bands, due to their public image and heavy performance schedule, became a source of pride for public schools (Hindsley, 1940). The National Bureau for the Advancement of Music, an agency created to promote the public interest in music, promoted the band movement heavily, stating, “a good school band can add more than perhaps anything else to the prestige of its school and town” (Koch, 1990; Mark & Gary, 2007; Mark, 2008, pg. 126). The early twentieth century was considered the “golden age of bands,” because of the excitement surrounding Sousa’s and Gilmore’s traveling bands, the rise of the school band movement, and the growing importance of music in schools (Battisti, 2002; Holz, 1962; Humphreys, 1989).

Band contests, both concert and marching, led to many innovations in instrumental music education. Standardization of band instrumentation, the publishing of full band scores instead of piano reductions, better teacher training programs, and a large growth in student enrollment can be attributed to the development of these band contests (Mark & Gary, 2007). To avoid the exploitation of students for purposes other than education and civic reasons, professional organizations such as the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and Music Educators National Conference established guidelines to protect the students (Mark & Gary, 2007). Opinions of band contests varied widely. Administrators were concerned events had one winner and many losers. Oversaturation and specialization issues were other cited issues with band contests. After

World War II, national band contests ceased to exist after they were discontinued during the war. A rating system, which is still in use in performance ensembles today, was established in place of the previous ranking system used in band contests (Mark & Gary, 2007). Ethical questions regarding competition are still debated in music education. However, these institutions survive in almost the same form and capacity as when they were first introduced to public schools.

Concert Band and Marching Band in the High School Curriculum

Concert bands are the cornerstone of any band program. A typical concert band performs a winter concert, a large group performance assessment, and a spring concert. One criticism of the concert band is its emphasis on adjudicated concert festivals usually held in the spring semester. However, not every school participates in these concert festivals. Each concert group performs three musical works in these festivals. In many cases, the ensemble will rehearse this music for months to achieve a high rating. This is a similar criticism to competitive marching band and its emphasis on one perfected show rehearsed over many months (Rogers, 1985). This is a reason some groups do not participate in concert festivals. When many band programs focus for large periods on a marching band show and a concert festival, both of which are adjudicated and graded, some students may grow bored of many repetitions of the same music.

Groulx (2010) indicated band directors who study concert band literature during marching band season as a significant factor that positively influenced festival ratings in his study. There could be a few reasons for this. Marching band music, due to the greater demand on posture and movement, is typically easier than concert band music. When the students practice fundamentals and sight-reading in a concert band setting, it might improve the performance of

the marching band music since it is easier. Students may grow tired of the repetitive practices of marching band; therefore, the concert band could provide a change of pace for those students.

Hayslett (1992) showed a significant decline in students' attitudes towards the importance of ratings after directors chose comments-only performance at festival. This suggested students' placed more importance on the ratings of the band's performance rather than the innate desire to have an excellent performance. The researcher found a correlation between high festival ratings and musical success in students who participated in competitive groups (Hayslett, 1992). However, the same students reported that they achieved less musical learning and skill development than other groups. While there may be no performance differences between competitive and noncompetitive groups, students who participate in competitive groups might focus more on the result than those in the noncompetitive programs. In this case, students wanted to earn something, rather than look back on what they learned during the process.

Groulx (2010) examined personality traits of band directors and the balance of marching and concert band participation. The results suggested approximately 83% of the directors balanced their time between marching and concert bands, and approximately 17% of the directors were focused on marching band. No directors focused primarily on concert band. However, band directors who balanced their ensemble time tended to earn higher concert festival ratings than the marching band focused directors. This could correlate with other research which stated marching bands are often the most visible aspect of a band program and how band directors are pressured to compete in band competitions (Rogers, 1985).

While concert bands are the foundation of a band program, marching band could be considered more important. Marching band is arguably the most visible aspect of a band

program. In most public schools, band is primarily a teacher-centered activity with students following the director's instructions (Allsup, 2012; Shively, 2004). However, many marching bands have a detailed student leadership structure. Shively (2004) asserted marching band is a good example of student-led instruction. The marching band gives students opportunities to develop leadership skills that may benefit them after participation in the marching band ends.

Some criticisms of marching bands center on the time commitment and the financial burden. Marching bands are asked to perform many times a year, much more frequently than a concert band. Participation in the marching band places time constraints and financial burdens on students who participate in these programs (e.g. travel costs and time spent). Competitive marching bands have stringent and thorough rehearsals, rivaling the practices of most after-school sports teams. Noncompetitive marching bands have after-school rehearsals also, but they do not rehearse as much as competitive marching bands due to simpler show design and the lack of a need for a perfect performance. The financial commitment places a strain on families who wish for their child to participate in a music program but may not be financially able to buy an instrument or pay the band fees required by many school districts. Another criticism of the modern school band program is that it is based largely in tradition, rather than innovation (Shively, 2004). The autocratic, militaristic approaches of the military band, on which the modern marching band is based, are criticized for their teacher-centered instruction with rigid guidelines and expectations (Miksza, 2013). Other research suggests competitive marching band does not raise achievement levels in music (Temple, 1973).

One positive reason for participation in a marching band may be the extra-musical benefits (Revelli, 1979; Rogers, 1985; Sheldon, 1994; Wickes, 1978). Isbell and Stanley (2011)

interviewed undergraduate students who participated in their open enrollment concert band at the university level. Out of 100 students surveyed, sixty-one respondents related their most memorable musical experience to formal music education in schools. Thirty-nine percent of participants named either participation in an adjudicated performance or winning a marching band competition as their most memorable musical experience in school. This research suggests the experiences that students take with them after participating in the marching band activity are similar to a person who participates in athletics (Isbell & Stanley, 2011).

Roles of the Concert Band and Marching Band

Concert bands and marching bands fulfill their roles in different ways, even though the foremost public outcome is the same – performances. Concert bands typically perform three or four concerts a year. Because of the emphasis on marching band at the start of the school year, some band programs do not start concert band rehearsals until after the football season is over or almost complete, which is typically in November. Programs offer a variety of concerts, such as holiday, Veteran's day, a rated festival, and a spring concert. The after-school time expectations for concert bands are often much lower than the commitment required in marching band. While concert bands often attend rated festivals, these ratings are usually only for the group participating and are not used in any formal competitive manner.

Due to the public nature of the performances, marching band may often be used as an advocacy tool for band programs (Garrison, 1986; Mark & Gary, 2007). Many high school band programs schedule festivals and contests on the weekends. Marching bands may be required to participate in parades, such as Veteran's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Christmas, Thanksgiving, 4th of

July, and other school-related parades throughout the year to encourage school and community spirit, reflecting the military tradition from which marching bands were formed.

The Cost of Participation in Band

Money is required to run a typical band program. A full, competitive fall marching band show is an expensive venture (Romero, 2011). Band fees can run up to \$600 or higher per year, including other costs such as the instrument, extra trips, uniform costs, and band camp (Romero, 2011). The equipment needed to maintain a well-respected wind ensemble or wind symphony also requires a substantial monetary investment. However, necessary functions of a band program may go unfunded in many school districts. For example, while sheet music may be the large instrumental ensemble's version of a textbook, several band programs rely on their band parent organizations, or booster clubs, to purchase new music. Many band programs hire outside instructors to teach percussion, costing additional money. Larger instruments, such as timpani and tubas, are usually owned by schools but the band booster club raised the money to purchase the instruments. Many band programs participate in large group performance assessments where the concert band travels to a central location and performs three contrasting works for a panel of adjudicators to receive a rating. The registration cost, bus travel, and in some cases, the substitute teacher, are usually covered by the local band booster group, not the school system. For a band to have the required equipment or participate in these events, the local band booster group must participate in fundraisers to raise money to support the band program. This requires additional time and effort from students and their parents.

Marching bands, competitive or noncompetitive, require their own sub-budgets, which require supplementary fundraising efforts from the local band booster group, the director(s),

students, and parents of the organizations. Many marching bands require specialized equipment, costumes and uniforms, props, electronics, instructors, customized music arrangements, and extensive rehearsal time to effectively realize their most basic function: to perform the half-time show at football games. If a band participates in competitions, there is an increased cost of travel, entry fees, and long rehearsal hours to be competitive.

The Differences Between Concert and Marching Band

When band was added to the public school curriculum, concert band and marching band competitions developed around the country (Mark & Gary, 2007). Dawes (1989) examined the relationships between marching band ratings and concert band ratings at different schools. Dawes concluded that there is no significant relationship between the marching band ratings and concert band ratings during the same school year. Success in the fall marching band season had no effect on any spring performance ratings. Dawes determined that the increased focus, demand, and monetary contribution to the marching band program did not seem to have any detrimental effect on a successful concert program. It would seem, therefore, that an increased emphasis on concert band programs should have no effect on the marching band program.

Rickels (2008) compared several variables amongst many Arizona marching band programs. Rickels suggested programs that rehearsed concert band music concurrently with marching band music at the beginning of the year produced higher scores at marching band festivals. A well-rounded offering of music produces better results than intensive focus on marching band for months at a time. Another finding in this study showed that cross-participation requirements, such as making marching band mandatory for all band students, were not significantly related to festival scores. Rickels further suggested positive correlations with

festival scores and total band program budget, number of instructors, size of the marching band, size of the entire band program, and the number of festivals attended. Higher festival scores were consistently earned by programs with more students, larger budgets, and more instructors.

Goodstein (1987) found that the size of the marching band is almost twice as powerful of a predictor of success, as defined by high festival scores and best overall band awards, compared to freshmen population, socioeconomic status, and concert band population. Goodstein further suggested this could be from a greater importance placed on marching band from band directors and adjudicators. Other studies corroborate this finding (Rogers, 1985; Rickels, 2008); directors increasingly placed more emphasis, effort, and resources into a successful marching band, sometimes at the neglect of the concert band program.

Davis (2000) found that a band program with a larger number of staff members was positively correlated with the outcomes at marching competitions. Hewitt (2000) explored how customized drill and music design is closely tied to the amount of funding available to a marching band program. Rickels (2008) reported that financial support was positively correlated with score outcomes at competitions. While these studies focused on competitive marching bands, not all directors decide to enroll their marching bands in competitions. However, these groups also cost considerable amounts of money, including transportation, specialized instruments, music, and uniforms for the band and color guard.

Band's Role in a Public School Curriculum

Students participate in high school band programs for many reasons. Many students want to continue playing the instrument that they began playing in middle school (Corenblum & Marshall, 1998). Other students wished to belong to a group or organization that fit their ideals

and personality (Adderly et al, 2003). Friendships, music selection, marching band, trips, and participating in an extracurricular activity are several of the reasons that students decide to participate in a band program (Fredrickson, 1997; Justus, 2001; Kinney, 1999; McCrary, 1997; Morrison, 2001; Rudaitis, 1996; Warnock, 2005). Some students wish to continue their music study simply because they enjoy playing and performing music on an instrument. It seems students do not cite musical aspects as frequently as the extra-musical reasons for continued participation (Fredrickson, 1997; Justus, 2001; Kinney, 1999; McCrary, 1997; Morrison, 2001; Rudaitis, 1996; Warnock, 2005). In all of these cases, music is not a primary reason band and other music ensembles exist, as far as students are concerned.

There are several benefits cited in research for students who participate in a band program. Band is an activity that offers opportunities for musical and extra-musical benefits. Garrison (1986) extols many extra-musical benefits for marching band, including discipline, teamwork, leadership, and physical activity, but criticizes the lack of musical benefits. Cowen (2006) suggests that marching band may help students, who may not otherwise be involved in any physical activity, meet their daily-recommended physical activity levels. Directors list a variety of reasons for participating in competitive marching band, including advocacy, morale, motivation, and student enjoyment of competition; these directors also state that tracking contest results is easier than monitoring aesthetic development (Bauer, 1983; Bruno, 1989; Goolsby, 1983; Hunt, 1983; Kohn, 1986; Spradling, 1990). Emphasis on contest and festival ratings could be a reason band directors focused on these performances.

Eccles and Barber (1999) studied the effects that various extra-curricular activities such as sports, marching band, and volunteering had on grade point averages, college attendance, drug

and alcohol use, and class attendance. Students who participated in marching band reported lower levels of drug use. In addition, students earned a higher grade point average and higher college attendance by the age of 21. Males who participated in marching band were found to be less likely to drink alcohol and skip school in grades 10-12 when compared to students who did not participate in an after-school activity and those who participated in sports.

Previous research exploring students' reasons for participating in band programs focused on the extra-musical benefits gained by the students. Little research has focused on the musical benefits gained by students. Why has research in a music education-related field focused on non-musical benefits? In the current educational climate, band directors may feel the need to justify the existence of the band program. Directors may feel pressured to resort to any tactic that could result in the continued existence of the music programs. A frequently cited reason in the justification for music in a public school curriculum is music students tend to score higher on standardized tests than those who do not participate in music classes (Vaughn & Weller, 2000). When directors use these examples as a way to validate the band program, it could undermine the musical rationale for the existence of the music program.

Band has been in the school curriculum across the United States since the early 20th century. However, band is, for the most part, largely the same in its approach in 2015, as it was when it was added to the curriculum in the middle of the nineteenth century. Band teachers have focused on band's tradition and primarily teach the way they were taught (Allsup & Benedict, 2008). Marching band specifically has a tendency to emphasize American competitiveness, efficiency, exceptionalism, and means-ends pragmatism (Allsup & Benedict, 2008). Trophies, placement awards, winning, rote teaching, and band competitions have been the result of the

focus on success in instrumental music education. Allsup (2012) argued band should shift from competitive, means-ends goals and focus more on the growth of students involved in band.

The Need For This Study

There has been some research in the past regarding retention and attrition in a band setting (Boyle et al., 1995; Gouzouasis, Henrey, & Belliveau, 2008; Hartley, 1996; Hayes, 2004; Humphries, 2012; Kinney, 2010; Sandene, 1994; Strickland, 2010). Much of the research has been quantitative and focused on external factors related to attrition. However, there has been little research about the perceptions of eighth grade band students about the high school band program and the effect marching band has on the retention of these band students during the transition between middle and high school. This study attempted to investigate and address the issues of retention and attrition in band between middle and high school and the effect marching band has on student decisions to continue enrollment.

There are many reasons why a student may not want to continue to participate in band after middle school. Some reasons could be loss of interest, lack of available time, or inability to fit the class into their schedule. Another possible reason could be the heavy emphasis on marching band in many band programs. It was hypothesized that band directors' continued stress on marching band negatively affects the retention of band students between middle and high school (Rickels, 2008; Rogers, 1985). Many high school band directors require participation in the marching band to be a member of the band program. In some schools, marching band is part of the daily class schedule. For example, in the fall, some band classes consist of music rehearsals for the marching band program, with the concert program beginning after marching band has concluded. In this case, the curricular decision for mandatory marching band

participation can limit student opportunities for incoming ninth grade students who want to participate in concert band only. Some programs offer marching band only as an extracurricular activity. It has no bearing on the concert band curriculum or a student's grades. Programs that have no marching band may be subject to other pressures, such as the community desire to have an outdoor ensemble or a school administrator's ideas about entertainment at sporting events.

As a band director, I have questioned the role of marching band in the band program. The heavy emphasis on marching band in many areas of the United States has led me to pursue this study in the hopes of gaining further data about continued band participation in high school when transitioning from middle school. Does the high school band program currently serve its students or does it serve the activity itself? Meaning, how can we, as band directors and music educators, ensure that students will receive a worthwhile music education through participation in a band program? I argue that we, as band directors and, more importantly, music educators, owe our students a renewed effort in teaching students about music through performance in band. I hope band directors may be able to use the information gleaned from this research to better recruit and retain students of all grade levels to continue participation in band during high school and throughout their lives.

Recent research in music education suggests enrollment numbers continue to dwindle in high school band programs (Strickland, 2010). Band directors need new approaches, strategies, and information to make educated decisions regarding their band programs. Without research in this area, directors of band programs will likely continue administering their programs using the same methods they currently use and this may reduce opportunities for students who need a high quality musical experience within the school. This research regarding the retention of band

students and the prominence of the marching band is important. The information that is discovered could aid band teachers in the future recruitment and retention of band students and help influence the curriculum design of the high school instrumental music program.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical perspective is a philosophical stance that informs the methodology, provides the context for the process, and grounds it in logic (Crotty, 1998). The quantitative research phase was grounded in post-positivism. Post-positivism attempts to identify and evaluate what may influence outcomes. The qualitative research phase was based in symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism is the idea that objects, people, situations, and events are created by what people may believe and not what may be objectively true (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). The interpretation of these human experiences is dependent on the point of view of the individual and is therefore socially constructed. The theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism as a basis for the qualitative phase of the study enabled the researcher to gain insight into eighth grade band students' perspectives about high school band programs.

The Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of eighth grade band students about high school band programs and the influence of marching band on their decision to participate in high school band. Using quantitative and qualitative data, this study investigated students' perspectives about the high school band program. By gathering data from eighth graders' perspectives, the research used the findings to suggest improvements to the process of recruitment and retention of band members between eighth and ninth grade. Analysis of eighth grade students' viewpoints was necessary to inform instrumental music teachers about how they

may better serve those who enroll in band programs. The following research questions guided this research:

1. What are eighth grade students' perceptions of high school band?
2. What are eighth grade students' perceptions of high school marching band?
3. What are the factors related to marching band that influence the participation rates of rising ninth grade band students?
4. What is the relationship between marching band participation and the retention rate of rising ninth grade band members?

2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are many reasons why students may or may not continue participation in a high school band program. Student attrition and retention in large performance ensembles has been a continuous topic in music education. Harrison (1989) reported that outstanding high school instrumental programs might be the exception. Warrener (1985) reported a decrease in music students across the country. From 1999 to 2004, the California public school student population increased by 5.8% while the percentage of all California public school students involved in music education courses declined by 50%, the largest decline of any academic subject area (Music for All Foundation, 2004). Instrumental ensembles are currently experiencing high attrition rates and low retention rates between sixth and twelfth grades across the United States (Strickland, 2010). It has been suggested that increased high school graduation requirements led to higher enrollment declines in instrumental music programs (Johnson, 1990). Leonhard (1991) found fewer instrumental music course offerings at the elementary and secondary level and the size of a school had a significant impact on the course offerings in music. Low retention and high

attrition rates during the transition between middle and high school have continued to be troubling issues for instrumental music educators (Hayes, 2005). Several researchers have described the attrition rate of instrumental music students between the eighth and ninth grade years as higher than any transition point other than between sixth and seventh grade (Boyle et al., 1995; Hartley, 1991; Humphries, 2012; Klinedinst, 1991). Retention rates in instrumental music have continued to fall despite previous research on the topic. Why are the retention rates continuing to decrease? Most importantly, what factors encourage continued student enrollment in band throughout middle and high school?

Student recruitment and retention are often mentioned in the same sentence; however, they require two different approaches with students. Hartley (1996) defined retention as, “instrumental music students who, once started, remained enrolled in the band program.” Recruitment consists of students who have not participated in a band program previously. Student attrition has been the highest between sixth and seventh grades, decreasing during the seventh grade year, then increasing to its second highest point between eighth and ninth grade (Humphries, 2012). Klinedinst (1991) suggested student retention could be easier to calculate with more precision than the student attrition rate. Researchers could focus on factors related to student retention rather than factors related to students who discontinued band enrollment.

Administrators can help promote the band program by assisting in the scheduling of classes. They may hinder the band program by not supporting the band director when confronted with problems, not providing financial assistance, or invalidating a successful band program. Other issues that have contributed to low retention rates in instrumental music include lack of funding, academic scheduling, conflicts with Advanced Placement (AP) and Honors classes,

facilities, peer influences, logistics, and the working relationships between teachers, students, and their families (Baker, 2009; Humphries, 2012; Klinedinst, 1991; Sigler, 2015). Katzenmoyer (2007) stated, "...no single factor explains why students quit instrumental music, and knowing what the possible reasons might be will help music teachers increase retention rates" (p. 40).

A student's lack of success on their instrument could affect whether they continue participating in band. Costa-Giomi et al. (2005) suggested diminished achievement in piano lessons led to an increased dropout rate of students between the first and second years of private lesson instruction. Students that experience diminished achievement in music performance resulted in an increased drop rate due to increased frustration and decreased competence (Evans et al., 2013; Freer, 2009). Students may be involved in too many after-school, or extra-curricular, activities that lead to diminished performance in academics and the activities in which the student is involved (Freer, 2012). Sandene (1994) suggested the early period of learning an instrument could discourage young students.

Parental support is important for retaining students in a band program. Students whose parents support their children's participation in band activities tend to have higher retention rates (Sichivista, 2007). Tracking the academic successes of band students compared to non-band students has been suggested as a way to encourage parents and students to participate in band (Gouzouasis et al., 2008). Sandene (1994) recommended several internal and external factors from a practitioner's perspective that could affect a student's motivation in a band program, including student motivation and support from the students' teachers and parents. Lack of parental support was one of the two most cited reasons for discontinued band participation (Boyle et al., 1995). Parental involvement has been cited as a key factor in the retention of

students in band (Holtz, 2001). If parents have supported the student being in band, the child is more likely to continue participating in band. However, parents might also have a negative influence on their student's continued participation in band also. Hallam (2001) stated parents who constantly remind their child to practice are a negative influence. Another negative influence involved parents that promoted gender associations with certain instruments to their children when they begin to choose their instrument in middle school (Fortney et al., 1993).

Reasons Middle School Students Join Band

Previous research has indicated that students list several reasons for why they initially choose to participate in middle school band. In this research base, the reasons most often cited by students to join band were to be with their friends and to be involved in the organization; students did not seem to join for purely musical reasons (Rudaitis, 1996; Warnock, 2005). Student interactions and friendships were more important to students' participation than the parent's involvement, even though the parent's support and involvement did make a difference. Morrison (2001) supported these findings, claiming students who are involved in music ensembles form close bonds and friendships with their fellow band members. Allsup (2012) described band as a place for a diverse group of students and suggested that band directors have a responsibility to their students to make band a safe learning environment for all individuals. In Allsup's conceptual band classroom, band members "own" the band program, work together in a safe environment, and gain self-esteem through individual, small group, and large group cooperative musical tasks (Allsup, 2012). Morrison (2001) described how students involved in music made their own social networks and created a culture that sought 'to enrich the lives of its members.'

Deisler (2011) interviewed students, teachers, and principals about their perceptions of band and what it offers the students, the school, and the community. The most common response from the students was that band offered musical experiences. Teachers were most often cited as saying that band offers students life skills that they would not receive elsewhere in the school curriculum. Eccles and Barber (1999) studied adolescent students' division of time between varying extra-curricular activities. Of those surveyed, 20% of females and 15% of males participated in band and/or orchestra. Students who participated in after-school activities, including band, were more likely to attend college and had lower drug use than their peers. Adderly et al. (2003) reported that band students formed their own groups for the same purposes as other social groups. Band students wanted a group to which they belong, friends, and to associate with others that may help their confidence, a sense of belonging, and self-esteem (Adderly et al., 2003).

Encouraging Student Retention in Band

Many researchers have offered solutions for encouraging retention for students enrolled in band (Baker, 2009; Bergee, 1989; Boyle et al., 1995; Corenblum & Marshall, 1998; Hayes, 2005; Humphries, 2012; Justus, 2001; Kinney, 2010; Klinedinst, 1991; McCarthy, 1980; Morrison, 2001). One suggestion was to minimize the conflicts between band and other classes. When faced with the choice of participating in band or taking academic classes, research indicates that students will choose the academic class most of the time (Baker, 2009). Academic achievement plays a significant role in predicting enrollment and retention in urban middle school band programs (Kinney, 2010). The researcher postulated that students who were excelling academically were more likely to excel in music (Kinney, 2010). In addition, higher

socioeconomic status (SES) was found to be a significant factor in predicting continued enrollment in eighth grade band than those from a lower SES (Corenblum & Marshall, 1998, Kinney, 2010; Klinedinst, 1991).

Why do students continue band when transitioning from middle school to high school? Research has indicated that students continue band from middle to high school when they were comfortable with the high school band director. Hayes (2005) found that the relationship between students and band directors, both middle school and high school, was important for continued enrollment in band. Continued success on a student's instrument and positive reinforcement of skill building can lead to continued band enrollment. If students did not understand they were achieving any type of success, they would give up and move on to another activity where they would find success (Costa-Giomi et al., 2005; Evans et al., 2013; Freer, 2009; Freer, 2012; Hallam, 2013; Legette, 1994). Klinedinst (1991) provided evidence that younger students valued music more when they were successful and felt that they were meeting the teacher's standards. Klinedinst (1991) found a statistically significant relationship between academic success and student retention. Advertising the students' accomplishments could be an effective way to garner student, parent, administrative, and community support (Sandene, 1994). Continued student support and encouragement, at the individual and group level, was important to continued student enrollment in band (Hayes, 2005). He suggested creating a performance opportunity for future high school students while they were in middle school, such as an eighth grade night with the high school band at a football game or a joint concert with middle and high school students.

Students need to be valued and encouraged to join and continue enrollment in band. Band students did not care about band unless the band director cares about them (Justus, 2001).

Students needed to feel celebrated, challenged, and supported by their teacher to feel good about their progress (Klinedinst, 1991). Well-liked and respected band directors were able to encourage students because the students believed in the director. Justus (2001) suggested keeping band and rehearsals as fun as possible, but standing firm with discipline. Students were more likely to stick with band throughout high school when the students knew they were appreciated and their time and dedication was valued (Justus, 2001; Klinedinst, 1991).

Nonmusical Factors of Student Retention in Band

Students who participate in school band programs become part of a larger culture. Morrison (2001) detailed how band is different from science or math classes – students belong, as a member, to the band ensemble. Band is a group activity with shared ownership, as everyone's participation and hard work contributed to overall success of the ensemble. Over time, as Morrison pointed out, students thought of themselves as “the” band, and not just members of the band. This correlated with Allsup's (2012) philosophy that band was more than a musical ensemble; the band was a place for a diverse group of students to gather to accomplish similar goals together. Students, as well as the director, transmitted various band traditions and expectations to the younger members, often times without even realizing what they were doing (Morrison, 2001). This was a constant reminder of the traditions and ownership in the band ensemble. Bands formed their own social structures during the time they spent together practicing and performing (Morrison, 2001). Albert (2006) found that some directors felt the retention of students had nothing to do with music, but was about involvement in an activity that

was perceived as fun and “cool.” As the students spent more time around each other, social structures began to form. These groups formed their own social hierarchy, which happened to contain the same students who were involved in the band ensemble. Gouzouasis et al. (2008) interviewed students about why they decided to continue in band over time. Every student used the term ‘geek’ to describe band students. They further described band students as smart, successful, and strong-willed individuals (Gouzouasis et al., 2008). While the band students were given the label ‘geek’, the students still had a strong self-concept and retained their self-confidence.

Scheduling of instrumental music classes is important to keeping students involved in band programs. Researchers have found that one way to keep students involved was to encourage cooperation among the music department, the guidance department, schedule coordinator, and the principal (Delzell, 1998; Hayes, 2005). By solving potential scheduling issues before they could become a problem, students may be able to continue enrollment in band. In a study by Rohner (2002), forty-four percent of the surveyed high schools and 30% of the surveyed middle schools used some type of block schedule. Seventy-three percent of the surveyed high schools on a 4x4-block schedule reported a drop in the enrollment of band classes by approximately 31%. Conflicts between band classes and Advanced Placement (AP) and Honors classes affected the enrollment of band in a negative manner (Blocher, 1997; Rohner, 2002; Sigler, 2015). Electives, including music, art, and drama, tended to lose some of the highest achieving students due to the conflicts with AP and Honors classes. Baker (2009) noted some reasons students could not participate in band included a lack of effort on the counselor’s part to fit it into the student’s schedule, an unwillingness to work with the student in changing

the schedule, or counselors advising students to drop band for more AP and Honors classes. In research by Baker (2009), 43% of students cited conflicts with other classes and 28% cited conflicts with AP class conflicts as the primary scheduling conflict with band. Five percent of the students cited athletic participation conflicts. Baker (2009) suggested early discussions with the administration and counselors about the school schedule to work out as many potential conflicts as possible so school music programs are not dramatically affected. The trust and the support of the school administration and counselors must be secured to ensure that conflicts can be solved with minimum disruptions to the band program (Baker, 2009).

Socioeconomic reasons can also affect a student's participation in a band program. Several researchers have studied whether socioeconomic characteristics could predict student aptitude and achievement in music (Asmus, 1990; Corenblum & Marshall, 1998; McCarthy, 1980). Asmus (1990) posited that a general attitude towards band and parental involvement could mediate the socioeconomic impact. SES was found to be a significant predictor of student retention; however, other factors that could have affected retention included teacher personality and teaching style, student attitudes towards music, self-concept in music, and family musical background (Klinedinst; 1991). The research further stated socioeconomic levels could predict student retention in music classes (Klinedinst; 1991). As a family's socioeconomic level increased, the student's opportunities increased, including more of an opportunity to study music. For students in low socioeconomic areas, their priorities may be with the core curriculum, working a job to help pay the bills for their family, or another life-altering situation. Klinedinst (1991) reported school music might not be as important in these students' lives. The music programs in these areas reflected the community and the needs of the students. Teachers had to

adjust to the community, rather than the students and communities adjust to the program. Kinney (2010) stated socioeconomic status (SES) was a more prominent predictor of retention in eighth-grade band students. The students who had a higher SES were more likely to stay enrolled in band than those with a lower SES. However, SES was not a significant predictor of sixth-grade band enrollment. Kinney (2010) suggested band directors should offer incentives and discounts to low SES families to interest more students to enroll in band.

McCarthy (1980) found that SES was a significant predictor of retention. McCarthy studied students' performance and the effects of individual instruction and student demographics on their performance. Fifth and sixth graders in an urban middle school were the participants. Race, gender, SES, and reading level were used to classify the student participants. The students in the study participated in their traditional classroom ensemble; however, they were given individual instruction in addition to their normal class time. Music reading, sight-reading, and student attrition rates were observed. Students who were given the individual instruction in addition to the classroom teaching had higher performance scores and higher reading scores than the students who only participated in the traditional classroom structure. In addition, students with higher SES participated in instrumental music programs longer. Other research suggested that SES was a factor that affected retention, but it did not affect initial enrollment in band (Kinney, 2010).

Positive teacher evaluations and feedback of students encourages students to continue to participate in the band activity. Corenblum and Marshall (1998) stated teachers who responded favorably to student's musical achievements had a higher retention rate of students the next year of band classes. Furthermore, students who felt parents, teachers, and the community supported

and encouraged the continuation of musical achievement were reflected in the student's attitudes towards music and band. However, the researchers noted that the student's attitudes did not indicate student intentions to continue with band in later years. In addition, the researchers found SES predicted student participation in the band program from parental support. SES, teacher evaluations of students, and perceived attitudes of important others predicted a student's intentions to continue in band.

Justus (2001) analyzed factors that encouraged retention and enrollment of students in band programs. The study examined characteristics that could influence band enrollment, such as school administration, band leadership characteristics, director characteristics, and school support systems. Five variables cited in the study accounted for 86.7% of the change in band enrollment. Schools with larger student populations had larger band programs. Band directors who had positive and inspiring work relationships with administration, students, parents, and communities had larger bands. Third, the higher band budget per student indicated a higher enrollment in the band. When the number of free and reduced priced lunches in a school was lower, the enrollment in band was higher. Lastly, white band directors had smaller enrollments in band than black band directors.

Mentor and Peer Relationships in Band

Hamann et al. (1990) studied the teacher and student perceptions of high school music classrooms and their relationship to music classroom achievement. The groups that showed high achievement in schools had positive correlations with high levels of teacher support, order, organization, clear rules, involvement, and association. Academic achievement also plays an important role in the continuation of band students. In multiple studies, (Corenblum & Marshall,

1998; Klinedinst, 1991; Kinney, 2010) academic achievement was shown to have a significant impact on the retention of urban middle school band students. The effect of academic achievement on the retention rate of students reflects research suggesting that higher achieving students might be more attracted to participating in band (Kinney, 2008). Academic achievement becomes more prominent over time in predicting student retention in band. Students who excel at other academics may be predisposed to excelling at music, while students who struggle tend to drop out, possibly to focus on their academics.

Peer relationships and friendships are important among school-age children, especially around the teenage years. Group dynamics in any type of after-school activity, including band, football, and cheerleading, can influence students to stay with the activity (Adderly et al., 2003). Without their friends, they were more likely to drop out and change activities to one in which they could remain with their friends. Respondents in Baker's study (2009) stated fun, friends, and a sense of community as important factors in participation of the instrumental music ensemble. Other studies have pointed to the importance of social friendships in participation of a band ensemble (Fredrickson, 1997; McCrary, 2001; Morrison, 2001). Deisler (2011) interviewed students, teachers, and principals about their perceptions of band and what it offered the students, the school, and the community. The teachers' most common response was, "It teaches them (students) life skills." Some examples of life skills included time management, empathy, resilience, problem solving, and communication. Principals most often responded by saying, "It gives them a place to belong." Students from low SES schools and teachers from high SES schools provided more value-related statements about band than teachers from low SES schools and students from high SES schools. A student from the study stated, "Band gives you another

family, we all love everyone and makes you feel like you belong. It's an amazing feeling to be a part of something bigger than yourself. Band = awesome.”

Music selection is an important factor that keeps students involved and enjoying band. Deisler (2011) found that students from higher SES placed more importance on the music characteristics performed in band than students from lower SES. Challenging music was rated significantly higher for the high SES students than the lower SES students. Students at the low SES schools rated tradition of success and band director personality as important factors in their enrollment in band. Conversely, the students rated challenging music and high quality music as unimportant factors of continued band enrollment. The high SES students rated their responses the opposite, with the emphasis placed on high quality music and challenging music. However, a student from a high SES school interviewed in the study stated that band directors should ask students for input with the music. This contradicted the importance placed on challenging music and instead shifted the emphasis to students' selection of music.

Motivation Theories in Band Retention

Attribution, self-efficacy, and locus of control are three theories that have been associated with student retention and attrition in band. Attribution theory was originally developed by an Austrian psychologist Fritz Heider in 1944 (Heider & Simmuel, 1944). The theory was developed to examine the ways people conceptualized their behaviors. Attribution theory indicated, according to Weiner (1972), that motivation and achievement were influenced by a student's belief about his or her success or failure at a given task. Successes in future tasks are predicated on the previous success or failure. If one achieved success on a given task, the individual would have a positive outlook on a future related task. If one failed at their task, the

person would have a negative outlook on the future task. Four common attributions cited in research were effort, ability, task difficulty, and luck (Weiner, 1972).

Students need to know they are being successful on their instrument and they are making progress. Klinedinst (1991) stated younger students valued music more when they were successful and living up to the teacher's standards. When students knew they were doing well, or simply improving, the student had positive opinions of their experience in music. Music students have attributed successful performances to internal factors, such as ability and effort, and anticipated more success as they continued music (Asmus, 1990; Kelley & Michela, 1980). The same studies indicated that poor performances are attributed to external factors, such as task difficulty and luck, and forecast lower expectations for future musical endeavors. As stated by the researchers, the specific relationship between attribution and the future intentions is unclear, with other factors likely involved. In a study by Legette (1998), student success or failure in music was found as related to the causal attributions of ability and effort. This finding was consistent with the findings of previous research in this area (Asmus, 1998; Austin, 1991; Legette, 1993). Legette's findings (1993) caused him to suggest that music educators place more importance on the effort put forward by students instead of ability. He felt that when a student achieved success and attributed it to ability that student was more likely to find success in the future because of an increased sense of pride. On the other hand, the student who failed at a task and attributed it to a lack of ability would continually fail at the task due to perceived low ability (Legette, 1993).

Self-efficacy is an important factor in music students' behaviors and attitudes (Hendricks, 2009; McCormick & McPherson, 2003; McPherson & McCormick, 2006). Bandura (1997)

stated that self-efficacy refers to an individual's ability to complete a task in a reasonable amount of time given the skills and knowledge the individual has. Three elements are important when describing an individual's self-efficacy: the subject of the task, the completion of the task in that subject, and the domain in which the task is to be completed. In Martin's (2012) study, students had an elevated level of musical self-efficacy. The researcher explained this was partially due to the study being done close to the date of an upcoming performance. Martin (2012) explained that musical self-efficacy changed frequently, depending on the time of the school year. In addition, student participants were charged a participation fee for band and attended after-school, so it could have been that the students had a higher level of self-efficacy due to the greater enjoyment and motivation to study music.

Locus of control theory (LOC) is a construct used to describe a person's control over a task (Rotter, 1954). An internal locus of control means the individual is in control of the task, while an external locus of control means outside influences are in control of the task. Locus of control approaches tasks according to how the student attributes their task success, whether it is in their own control or if it is an external factor. Locus of control (LOC) was developed by the psychologist Julian Rotter (Rotter, 1954). People with an external LOC are easily influenced by others and tend to attribute their success to luck rather than effort, whereas those with an internal LOC view themselves as being in control. Lefcourt (1982) described the differences between internal and external LOC as whether or not an individual perceived that his or her actions were under their own control. If an individual felt as though they were in control of their own actions, they had a strong internal LOC, but if an individual felt outside forces were in control, they had a strong external LOC. In Legette's study, females perceived ability and effort to be more

important factors than did males (1998). These findings contradicted previous research that showed females tend to have more external LOC, attributing success or failure to task difficulty or luck (Bar-Tal, 1978).

In a study by Gifford et al. (2006), locus of control was found to be a predictor of first-year academic success in students. Students with a higher internal locus of control earned higher grades than those with a higher external locus of control. As a result, the researchers argued those with a higher external locus of control were more at-risk for dropping out of college. Asmus (1986) conjectured that students tended to name internal reasons for success or failure in music. Therefore, band students were more likely to continue or discontinue band participation due to internal reasons, not external forces out of their control. Students were likely to associate success at a given task to effort when they were younger. Older students associated success with ability.

Reasons Students Decided to Discontinue Band Enrollment

Previous research regarding student attrition rates in instrumental music showed a loss of interest by the students as the largest factor influencing student attrition (Boyle et al., 1995). Other contributing factors were a lack of communication, interests in other areas such as sports, and conflicts with scheduling. Monetary concerns were not a prominent reason for student discontinuation. Hartley (1991) stated there “...appears to be increased attrition in instrumental music when students change buildings, and probably even more so, when students change teachers.” Boyle et al. (1995) approached the student attrition rates of Florida instrumental music students from the perspective of the teacher. The researchers cited three primary causes of student attrition rates of middle school band students: loss of interest, scheduling conflicts, and

lack of parental support. An additional item cited for the attrition, which had not been present in previous research, was band teachers' perception of students' lethargy. Musical self-efficacy was an important factor as to why students lost interest in middle school band (Martin, 2012). Hartley (1991) studied whether the grade level had any effect on whether students continued in instrumental music. He found that the grade level of the student musician had no effect on enrollment and retention. This finding contradicted previous research indicating that the attrition rates increased at the end of the sixth grade year of band and at the end of the eighth grade year of band (Boyle et al., 1995, Harley, 1991; Humphries, 2012; Klinedinst, 1991). However, while Bandura (1997) stated the success and failure rate were the most important part of self-efficacy beliefs, attribution theory could be used to understand how students attributed these successes and failures and to understand the origins of their musical self-efficacy (Martin, 2012).

One reason students were no longer interested in band was that they viewed it as a short-term hobby in which to partake for a couple of years (Sloboda, 2001; Younker & Renwick, 2002). Boys in particular had a hard time choosing band in high school due to the social stigmas with being involved in music in high school over sports (Green, 2005). Sloboda proposed that students view music instrument study as less important than academic subjects and does not relate to any real world application (2001). In addition, he argued that some of the reasons students discontinued instrument study included the perception of playing an instrument as boring and a changed perspective of accomplishments in music (Sloboda, 2001).

Peer pressure has been cited as a growing problem with band enrollment (Winkler, 1998). Student recognition depended on the status the peer group assigned to the band program (Justus, 2001). Brown (1990) stated that 60% of students surveyed chose not to participate in band due to

negative peer pressure. Peer pressure was one of the more significant influences during their teenage years (Justus, 2001). Male band students were sometimes labeled as “sissies” and were subject to being picked on and branded for not playing sports (Green, 2005). All children, regardless of gender, experienced more bullying if they played an instrument that others considered inappropriate for their gender (O’Neill & Boulton, 1996). Teenagers were especially sensitive to the negative peer pressure. Students are concerned with appearances and others’ perceptions of them as these influenced the band students’ own self-worth. The negative social stigma associated with participating in band could harm band students’ chances for a higher social status. Some students found it necessary to participate in sports at the high school level as a way to gain more social acceptance (Brown, 1990; Green, 2005). This made the student choose between two competing activities.

Students who lose interest in playing their instrument do not continue in a band program (Sloboda, 2001). Previous research stated that some students, when beginning band, did not realize the large amount of work required to play an instrument well (Boyle et al., 1995). The researchers surveyed middle school band directors about their thoughts about why students dropped out of school music programs. Student loss of interest in playing an instrument and a lack of time were two oft-cited reasons for discontinuing participation in band (Boyle et al., 1995; Sloboda, 2001). The teachers felt music study and performance should provide enough motivation for students to participate in school music (Boyle et al., 1995). The researchers found that teachers were not doing enough to engage students in the band activity. The focus on the performance aspect of band and the separation between school music and “real world” music distanced students from band instruction. While many studies have shown that student success

on an instrument was important to retaining students in band, Boyle et al. (1995) cited conflicting results which implied success alone does not keep students enrolled in a band class.

Bergee (1989) penned an article discussing the problems and potential solutions for band programs in retaining students. Issues included students being forced out of classes due to academic requirements, not enough classes in the day to take band, the perceived relevance of band to the students in the school, and a push to make band classes more academic in nature. Johnson (1990) stated increased graduation requirements led to an increase of attrition rates in music classes due to decreased elective options.

According to Bergee (1989), the two most common ways individuals identified a successful band program were the number of students enrolled in band and the length of the performance schedule. These characteristics are similar to band ensembles today. By focusing on size, and not on quality, band directors essentially created this problem. Bergee (1989) suggested lower class sizes and removing marching band from the school day and making it an extra-curricular activity. Other suggestions included shortening the rehearsal and performance schedule to retain more students and removing the competitive aspects of the music classroom.

Another factor that may contribute to students discontinuing band enrollment was the time commitment. Brown (1985) indicated 56% of parents who were surveyed specified the lack of practice time available to the students due to other extra-curricular activities as one factor that lead to discontinued band enrollment. Sports were one of the primary reasons for quitting band. The same survey stated 61% of the students felt band took up too much of their time outside of the school day. Brown (1994) reported one of the biggest criticisms directors had of their students was a lack of commitment by the students due to their other obligations. From this

conflicting research, it appears that the expectations of the directors and the commitment of the students are at odds with one another.

Previous research stated that directors considered band rehearsals as a necessity for a successful band program (Werpy, 1995). However, student's lack of motivation has been a growing concern amongst music educators and has become one of the major issues currently faced by band directors (The 2000 Survey, 2000). A high level of commitment was needed from students to attend the numerous practices and rehearsals required for a performance. Student motivation has affected participation in a band program. Students also withdrew from band because they were not enjoying their commitment (Corenblum & Marshall, 1998; Gouzouasis et al., 2008; Hagner, 1985; Werpy, 1995).

While marching band has been a popular component of a school band program, some authors have pointed out the drawbacks of a prominent competitive marching band. Some authors have criticized the excessive time spent in marching band as a continuing problem causing fatigue among the students, parents, and directors (Marzulli, 1985; Mayerhofer, 1985; Notari, 1985). Another criticism was the emphasis on one marching band show, due to the competitive nature of the marching band (Marzulli, 1985). Critics argued that the marching band shows were similar, and they blended when you observed several at the same time (Marzulli, 1985). Suggestions from the authors included toning down the emphasis on competitive marching band slightly, and giving students more selection in the musical choices (Moss, 1985; Notari, 1985). In addition, it is recommended that band competitions should be chosen carefully, in amount and location (Marzulli, 1985).

Music in the public school curriculum is in a complicated situation. Music is considered part of the core curriculum in elementary school. However, high school music is often considered an elective course reserved for certain individuals. Dunlap (1993) argued high school music is not about the teaching of music but is concentrated on public performances of music. Some examples of music classes offered include the history and analysis of music, world music, or composition. These areas of music are often neglected due to the demands of concert preparation. Dunlap (1993) advocated for a music program that would provide students with “a meaningful, lifelong participation in musical activities” (p. 33). Justus (2001) discussed how band programs must work harder to convince the school and community that band programs are still relevant in the 21st century. Justus argued that band programs must adapt to their communities and convince their stakeholders of their relevance. Trust and support must be earned by band directors and administrations.

Students who want to participate in music in high school have limited opportunities to do so. In most cases, a student’s only option to take a music class involves a large performing ensemble, usually band or chorus. Williams (2007) argued this has alienated many students from music in high school. While performance ensembles have attained high levels of achievement in music performance, not all students reach this high level of performance. Williams (2007) stated many students hide in large groups while letting others “do the work.” The results further indicated that the attrition rate of performance ensembles from beginning to graduation was approximately 50% (Williams, 2007). Elpus (2015) found that females were more likely to enroll in band, chorus, and orchestra programs in the United States. However, the students who tend to pursue instrumental music education are largely male (Elpus, 2015).

Hagner (1985) outlined many reasons why students wanted to quit band. She suggested that band directors must realize students may not be quitting because of anything you may or may not have done. In many cases, the band director cannot do anything about it. One potential scenario described by Hagner (1985) involved teachers intimidating students into having a negative opinion of the band due to the teacher's negative opinion. Another potential problem in beginning music classes was that the music teacher tended to expect too much too quickly from new instrumental students. This alienated students and may have frightened off good students due to an attribution of failure in music. Hagner (1985) suggested moving slowly, confidently, and constantly reassuring music students to avoid frustration.

Conclusion

Throughout this literature review, issues regarding the retention and attrition of instrumental music students have been critically examined. Issues regarding declining student interest, increasing student appeal in band, and various theories of motivation and behavior have been explored in detail. However, there are still many questions to be answered.

Many different reasons for declining student interests in high school instrumental music ensembles have been presented. Some involved a loss of intrinsic interest, while others involved extrinsic reasons, including choice of music repertoire and attitude of the high school teacher. There is some disagreement as to the leading cause of student attrition in instrumental music ensembles.

Increasing the student retention rate of instrumental music ensembles between middle school and high school is critical to the long-term survival of the band activity. Some of the motivational strategies focused on appealing to more of what students want out of band – music

that appeals to the student, less time spent in band rehearsals, and an opportunity to participate in other aspects of music, not only performance. However, other research explored the attachment to marching band and that students want to participate in marching band competitions. With this scope of research, it is important to gauge what are the most critical factors of student attrition and retention and how to balance the instrumental music program.

Attribution, locus of control, and self-efficacy are important theories for the potential understanding of student motivation and interest in instrumental music ensembles. These theories can ground our understanding of why students lose, or retain, interest in instrumental music ensembles. Attribution theory could help explain why students suddenly give up in instrumental music. Locus of control might explain how and why students who participate in band ensembles place credit or blame on internal and external factors. Self-efficacy might indicate how students feel about band and their ability to complete tasks in music. These theories may work together to shape a student's attitudes in instrumental music ensembles.

While there is research in each of these three areas, data regarding the perceptions of middle school students of high school band is limited. The topics discussed here could affect the perceptions of the middle school band students and their effects on participation in instrumental music ensembles. In addition, the marching band could have its own influence on the decision to continue in high school band. This literature review has outlined justification for additional research on this topic, involving both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to gain a broader understanding of the data. Such research findings might shape policy and curriculum decisions in instrumental music ensembles to better meet the needs of students in 21st century education.

3 METHODOLOGY

The retention and attrition rates of band members between eighth and ninth grade have concerned band directors for many years. Many factors played into the decision-making process of eighth graders when tasked with the possibility of continuing their music education in a band ensemble in high school. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of eighth grade band students about the high school band program and the influence of marching band on their decision to participate in high school band. It was hypothesized that continued enrollment in high school band was dependent on several factors, including friends, music selection, and conflicts outside of school, and that the marching band had some effect on continued enrollment in high school band.

Theoretical Perspective

Because this research used a mixed methods research design, it employed multiple theoretical perspectives. The quantitative research phase was based in post-positivism. Post-positivism differs from positivism in that positivists merely observed the world around them and reported their observations; post-positivists construct a theory of the world based on their observations (Creswell, 2007; Crotty, 1998). The qualitative phase was based in symbolic interactionism (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). Symbolic interactionism is the approach where human experiences are critiqued through interpretations. The meanings people give to these experiences are constructed by the individual observing the experience (Bogden & Biklen, 2007).

Research Design

The research used a fixed mixed method research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). A fixed mixed methods design involves a predetermined method that is planned before the study

begins (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Phase one employed an electronic questionnaire consisting of Likert-type responses. The questionnaire was determined to be the most effective way of gathering information from a large group of students and to garner quantitative data. The second phase of the study utilized focus group interviews with students selected from the questionnaire population. The focus group interviews provided a span of responses regarding why students are choosing, or not choosing, to participate in band in high school and how marching band affected their decision-making process (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

The purpose of the quantitative research phase was to examine, describe, and investigate characteristics of a group of people that had at least one characteristic in common. A survey is considered the most basic form of descriptive research (Phillips, 2008). The qualitative research was used to describe students' experiences from their perspective (Roberts, 2010). The researcher chose the mixed methods design so that the small focus group interviews could inform, triangulate, and compliment the large-group data collected from the electronic survey. The intent was that the qualitative data would inform the statistical data gathered from the quantitative portion of the research study. By using the two vehicles for data collection, the researcher hoped to gain a broader understanding of the data collected.

Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of eighth grade band students who attended rural and suburban schools in the southeastern United States. Seven middle schools from four school districts in the southeastern United States participated in the study. The projected sample size of 350 eighth grade band students was calculated from the total number of band students enrolled at the seven participating middle schools. The actual sample size was 282 individuals. Informal

approvals were secured from middle school band directors within the sample region. After an adequate number of informal approvals were secured, the process of gaining research approval from the local school districts and the researcher's university Institutional Review Board began. Participants were limited to schools where the director was a member of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) and the state affiliate. Logistically, it was easier to collect data from all eighth grade band students than recruit ninth grade students who were in middle school band but may have chosen not to participate in high school band. The study concentrated on the perceptions of eighth grade students about the high school band and the marching band because of the potential for a better understanding of the problems stated in the research questions. There were two primary reasons eighth grade band members were chosen for this research study. First, by surveying students before they entered high school, the research was able to investigate students' perceptions of the high school band program and the marching band. Second, there was potential that many responses would indicate a choice to discontinue band in high school.

Sampling Procedures

All eighth grade students who were enrolled in band at the participating schools were candidates for the research. The participating students were located at seven middle schools with similar characteristics. The middle school bands varied in size and location. The sizes of the middle school bands ranged from 40 to 140 students and represent suburban and rural schools. By inviting all of the eighth grade students in each participating school's band program, no student felt left out and the principal's willingness to approve the study was potentially increased.

Instrumentation

The Perceptions of High School Band Assessment (PHSBA) was designed for this study. It consisted of two parts: an electronic survey and focus group interviews with four students at each school, two who intended to continue in high school band, and two who intended to discontinue band in high school. The electronic survey was designed by using the Contributing Factors to Band Enrollment Questionnaire by Justus (2001) as a guide. The questionnaire was designed to collect data based on factors of student enrollment in high school band (Justus, 2001).

The PHSBA questionnaire contained 25 Likert-type items about 8th grade band students' experiences as band members, perceptions of the high school band, perceptions of the high school marching band, and other issues that may have affected their intended decision to participate in high school band (Appendix D). It concluded with demographic questions asking for gender, race, instrument choice, and years enrolled in middle school band.

Focus group interviews followed the administration of the electronic survey. Four students were interviewed at seven different schools. The students formed two pairs: one pair of students who stated they would participate in high school band and one pair of students who stated they would not participate in high school band. The student interviewees were purposefully selected from the pool of students whose criteria will be explained thoroughly later in this section. The interviews were semi-structured in nature to give the researcher some flexibility in asking follow-up questions during the interview sessions (Roulston, 2010). Creswell (2007) refers to this as an emergent design, which is considered a key component of qualitative research.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was performed to evaluate the validity of the electronic survey and the design of the small focus group interview process. The site for the pilot study was a local high school band program with ninth and tenth graders. The electronic survey was designed using Justus' (2001) questionnaire as a reference (Appendix A). The guiding questions were created for the focus group interviews that served as a follow-up to the electronic survey using Gouzouasis, Henrey, and Belliveau (2008) as a guide for the protocol of the small focus group interviews (Appendix B). The main purposes of the pilot study were:

- 1) to gather feedback on the electronic survey and the interview,
- 2) to inform final design of the electronic survey and interview,
- 3) to determine if the wording of the items on the electronic survey and interview was appropriate and clear,
- 4) to estimate the time needed for the electronic survey and the small focus group interviews, and
- 5) to inform the administration of the electronic survey and interview.

The pilot study was intended to serve as a feasibility study at the time of its implementation. The researcher received approval from university Institutional Review Board (IRB), local school board, and the principal before administering the pilot study. Informed consent, child assent, and parent permission forms were distributed to 100 potential participants. An information letter was attached to the forms and to an email to the parents describing the purpose of the study to recruit participants. Sixty-nine forms were returned for a 69% return rate. A potential issue with the return of the forms involved a winter snowstorm, in combination with

a previously scheduled winter break, which led to thirteen straight days without school. This negatively affected the return rate due to the long period without face-to-face contact with the students. The students whose forms were returned were taken to the computer lab by the researcher where they completed the electronic survey portion of the PHSBA. The students were given instructions as they entered the room. All surveys were completed at the website www.surveymethods.com. The mean time needed to complete the survey was four minutes, ten seconds. Including the travel time to the computer lab, directions for the survey, and logging in to the computer, each student finished within 15 minutes.

The electronic survey consisted of twenty-five Likert item prompts ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The survey included an option for “I do not understand” and had no neutral option. Students entered descriptive demographic information at the end of the survey. After analyzing the pilot study data, the researcher altered the Likert scale for the full study. The researcher reversed the prompt data so “strongly disagree” was 1.00 and “strongly agree” was 4.00. When analyzing the quantitative data of the pilot study in its raw form, a statistical mean of 1.00 ($M = 1.00$) indicated that all students reported, “strongly agree” as their answer. The positive Likert responses (e.g. “agree”, “strongly agree”) were changed so a statistical mean of 4.00 ($M = 4.00$) would result from all students selecting “strongly agree,” and a statistical mean of 1.00 ($M = 1.00$) would result from all students selecting “strongly disagree.” This resulted in the statistical analysis being easier to understand in the pilot study.

The interview segment of the PHSBA included ten open-ended questions intended to gain a further understanding of why students participate in a band program. The four participants were randomly selected by the principal from the available participants who indicated they were

willing to participate in the interview on the consent forms. These interviews were recorded by a handheld Sony digital recorder. The approximate time to complete each interview was 20 minutes. Each student was given a pseudonym to protect his or her identity in the pilot study. This was a heavily scripted interview, so the researcher read directly from a script without any additional questions. The choice of a heavily scripted interview protocol resulted in an inability to deviate from the written script (Creswell, 2007; Roulston, 2010). The researcher followed Creswell's interview protocol with influences from Jacob and Furgerson (Creswell, 2007; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Each participant was asked the same questions in the same order. The interviews were held after school in the band room's office. No other students were in the band room at the time. The average completion time of the interview was 8 minutes and 26 seconds. In most cases, the student's responses were shorter than anticipated by the researcher. This could have been a result of the heavily structured interview approach. Due to the format choice of the heavily scripted interview, the responses did not provide the depth of understanding the researcher hoped to gain.

Pilot Study Conclusions and Modifications

After reviewing the processes and results of the pilot study, changes were made to the PHSBA instrument. Several prompts were reworded due to the change in demographic from ninth grade students to eighth grade students, typographical errors, and confusion regarding phrasing of some prompts. The electronic survey was initially targeted to ninth grade students. After the implementation of the pilot study, the researcher altered the population of the study to focus on the perception of eighth grade band students rather than ninth grade band students. The population of the study was changed for three main reasons: 1) it was determined from the

responses that the perceptions of eighth graders would better answer the research questions; 2) it was logistically easier to survey and interview 8th graders who were in band rather than 9th graders who may or may not be in band; and 3) the potential results from 8th graders could better answer the primary questions concerning retention than 9th graders. After this change in demographics, many of the prompts had to be reworded to be appropriate for 8th grade band students. However, the integrity of the items from the pilot study was retained when rephrasing the prompts. Johns (2010) suggested Likert-type prompts should be as simple, short, clear, and unambiguous as possible. Likert responses were altered to provide a range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) with 4 providing a neutral option to make each item symmetrical, or equidistant, from the neutral response. Several researchers suggested five or more responses for accurate regression analysis when using a Likert survey, which prompted the adjustment to the Likert items for the full study (Dawes, 2008; Fricker, 2014). When the pilot study was originally designed, the researcher followed Justus' (2001) survey design, which consisted of 4-point Likert items with no neutral option. This is otherwise known as a forced choice item. Fricker (2014) stated Likert-type scales without the neutral midpoint make regression analysis difficult. For accurate regression analysis with Likert items, researchers have to assume the distance between each category is equidistant for the data to be considered interval data (Fricker, 2014). This new information led to the change in the Likert items for the full study.

The majority of the pilot study survey prompts seemed to be understood by the participants. Even so, several PHSBA prompts were removed for lack of clarity in the responses and confusion from the pilot study participants. The remaining prompts were reworded for clarity for eighth grade band students. For instance, Question 2C was reworded to refer to middle

school band. Prompt 3A was removed due to the change of population from current high school band students to eighth grade band students. Prompt 3C was altered to specify the perception of the time required to participate in marching band. Prompt 4A was clarified and reworded to address the target population.

The protocol adopted for the pilot study interviews permitted no opportunities for follow-up questions. Several of the responses from the participants in the pilot study did not provide much depth. The interview protocol was changed to that of a semi-structured interview. Roulston (2010) suggested semi-structured interviews allow more interaction between the interviewer and the participant and permit follow-up questions on a topic. The change in interview structure allowed a more thorough investigation into various topics and produced a better understanding of the participant's thoughts on a particular subject.

Full Study Population

After completing the pilot study, approximate sample sizes were calculated for the full study. The sample sizes for independent t-test and multiple regression were determined by using the software G*Power, v.3.1.9.2. The largest sample size needed for the necessary 95% power and a medium effect size ($d = .25$) was calculated to be 252. The effect size was calculated from the results of the pilot study. To allow for absences, for students who did not return the forms, and other potential issues, the goal was to have a sample population of 350 participants.

Approval was obtained from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The timeframes and requirements of the participating school systems varied. According to the application and guidelines, the study qualified as an expedited study. IRB approval required child assent and parent permission forms for each participant. These are found in Appendices B

and C. Approvals from the local school districts were immediately obtained following approval from the university's IRB.

Full Study Quantitative Design

Part one of the Perceptions of High School Band Assessment (PHSBA) was the electronic survey (Appendix D). All eighth graders participating in band who returned the student assent and parent permission forms participated in the survey. The students were given instructions to answer all of the questions. If a student was unsure of an answer, did not have an answer to a particular question, or did not want to answer the question, they were to leave it unanswered. After a brief period of allowing questions to be asked pertaining to the directions or procedures, the students were given 20 minutes to complete the electronic survey. The electronic survey was administered at the website www.surveymethods.com. After completing the survey, any questions regarding the implementation of the survey were answered before the students returned to their classrooms.

Full Study Qualitative Design

Part two of the PHSBA was the small group focus interviews. The qualitative phase of the study began after completing the quantitative data collection at each school. The researcher administered the focus group interviews (Appendix E). There were thirteen focus groups, two per school with one exception, with two student participants in most groups. The interviews were recorded using a handheld Sony recording device. The students were chosen by the researcher according to four criteria: 1) two students who intended to continue in high school band and two students who did not intend to continue in high school band; 2) participation in the electronic

survey; 3) willingness to stay after school to participate in the focus group interview; and 4) at least one female was included from each school.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the electronic survey was entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 20 (SPSS) to analyze. The data was analyzed using descriptive and comparative measures. After the statistics were compiled, independent t-tests were used to detect the differences between the groups. A multiple regression analysis was performed on the Likert-type prompts.

The qualitative data analysis used a classical grounded theory approach. In grounded theory methodology, the theory is generated from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory is the generation of emergent conceptual categories and their properties that are then integrated into hypotheses (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hallberg, 2006). The process of coding involves identifying, naming, categorizing, and describing phenomena found in the data collected (Borgatti, 2005; Hallberg, 2006). In Patton's book (as cited by Bowen, 2005), "inductive analysis means that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis." The data was then analyzed to answer the question, "What is this about?" The goal was to code the data into general categories and then refine into themes that could then be analyzed and compared throughout the data collection and analysis. As the researcher observed more data, the theory was continually refined to describe the data collected.

In grounded theory, data collection and coding are interrelated activities that occur simultaneously and continue until the main, or core, category has been named (Glaser & Strauss,

1967). The coding process involved open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. When beginning the coding process, several interviews were first read before coding any data. After establishing a basis of data, coding was started at the sentence level. The data was continually refined as new codes emerged to explain the data in more detail. The data was initially divided into similar groupings in preliminary categories of information. Following the coding process, the categories were further refined into similar categories. Once data saturation was reached, the categories were organized into themes in which an understanding of the data was articulated (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The focus group interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed using the HyperTRANSCRIBE and HyperRESEARCH bundle of qualitative analysis software.

Limitations

There were three primary limitations to this study. One limitation was the limited geographical sampling. Since the area of research was conducted in one region of the United States, the generalizability of the study was limited. The second limitation was the validity of the survey instrument. The electronic survey was designed from a previous study by Justus (2001); however, the PHSBA was created for the purposes of this study. The third limitation was the situational bias of the researcher. The researcher was a practicing teacher in the state in which the study was being conducted. This could have affected the data collection, results, and discussion due to the professional relationships between the researcher and other band directors. The anonymity of the participants should have reduced the potential conflicts between band directors and their students. Additionally, these same safeguards should have reduced the potential conflict between the researcher and the teachers of students in this study.

4 QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

All participants completed the Perceptions of High School Band Assessment (PHSBA) through the website www.surveymethods.com. The researcher transferred the data into SPSS[®] Version 20. All statistical analysis was completed with this software. Every student participant completed the same version of the PHSBA. In addition, all negatively worded prompts were reverse scored. Two hundred eighty-two participants completed the survey, with seven additional participants submitting incomplete surveys. The incomplete surveys were not used in the analysis. Several demographic questions were asked in the PHSBA to acquire information regarding participants' gender, age, experience in middle school band, and their primary instrument choice. All participants in the study were currently in eighth grade and involved in band at their school. The population was strongly skewed toward females ($N = 189$) versus males ($N = 92$), with one participant not reporting their gender. Teachers similarly reported that their classes were skewed toward females.

Participants were asked to report their years of experience in band classes during middle school. The mean years of experience ($M = 2.89$) indicated that the average student participant enrolled in middle school band in sixth grade and remained enrolled in band until the time of this study as an eighth grade student. Continued enrollment was important because it indicated that students who began in sixth grade decided to continue participation in band. Students who had decided to discontinue band before their eighth grade year were not included in this study.

Students were also asked to indicate their primary instrument of choice in middle school band. This data is presented in Figure 1. The purpose of this question was to gauge whether there was a correlation between instrument groups and the decisions made by students to continue

participation in high school band. There were no statistically significant differences of students grouped by their instrument selection when compared to the groups indicating continued band enrollment. Sixty-four percent of the participants reported playing a woodwind instrument, 30% of the participants reported playing a brass instrument, 5% reported playing a percussion instrument, and 1% did not report any instrument. While there can be no conclusions drawn from this data, this was consistent with previous research about the instrument preferences of adolescent students and their gender (Hallam, Rogers, & Creech, 2008).

Students were asked about their race. Forty-eight percent ($N = 135$) of the participants reported their race as White or Caucasian, not of Hispanic origin. Thirty-six percent ($N = 100$) of the participants reported Black or African American, not of Hispanic origin. Seven percent ($N = 21$) of the participants reported themselves as Hispanic, 5% ($N = 13$) reported themselves as Asian or Pacific Islander, less than 1% ($N = 2$) reported themselves as Indian or Alaskan native, and 4% ($N = 11$) did not report any race.

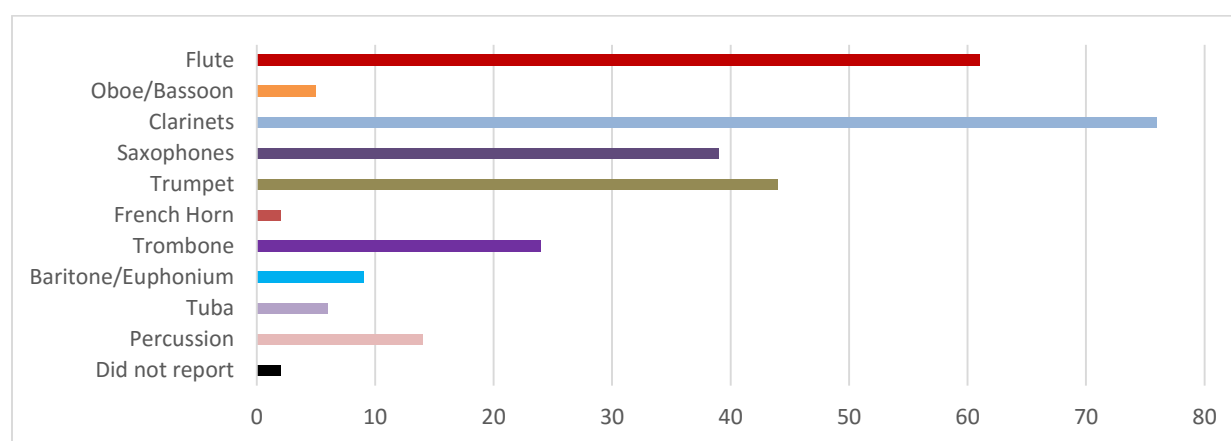


Figure 1. Students' primary instrument of choice in middle school band.

The last demographic question asked if students intended to continue participation in high school band. Sixty percent of the ($N = 169$) participants indicated their intention to continue band

in high school. Thirty-one percent ($N = 88$) of the participants specified that they did not intend to continue enrollment in band in high school. Nine percent ($N = 25$) of the participants stated they were undecided. This data is presented in Figure 2.

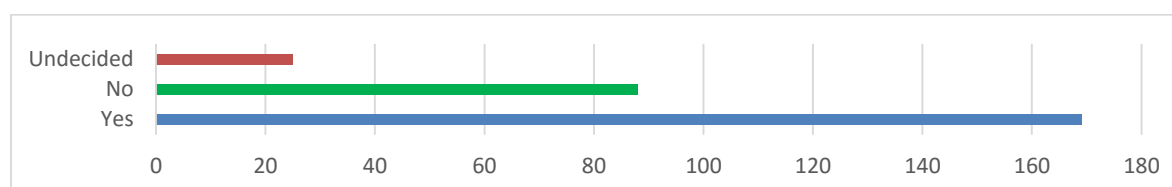


Figure 2. Number of students intending to continue high school band participation.

Purpose of Question 1. Question one of the survey asked participants to input their anonymous survey code. Each code was a five-digit number designating a specific middle school and the student participant number. Participants were selected from seven middle schools. The sample included 282 eighth grade band students. The population dissemination by school can be viewed in Figure 3 below.

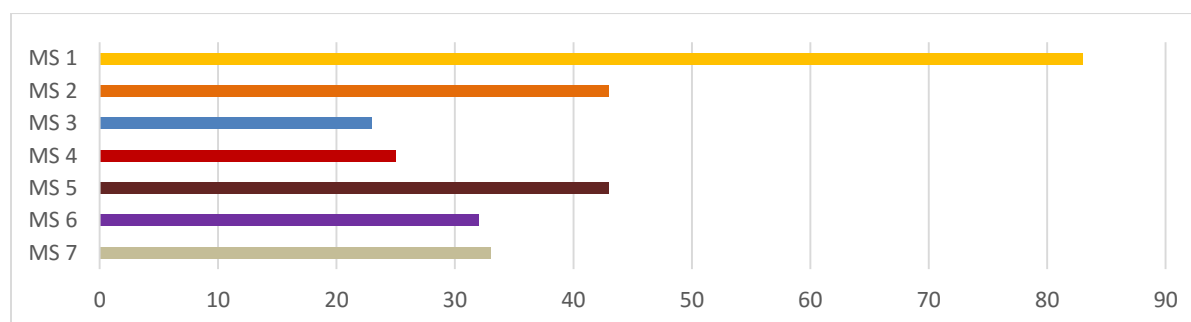


Figure 3. Number of participants by school.

The participants were not evenly divided among the schools. The middle school band sizes varied widely from school to school. A decision was made to continue with the sample sizes due to voluntary participation, approval of school districts, and regional comparability. The initial phase of sampling did not produce enough survey responses to reach the necessary number of participants necessary for preliminary power analysis. A request was made for each school to

provide more participants in order for the required number to be reached. Though the initial participant goal was 350 participants, the final total of 282 participants satisfied the requirement for preliminary power analysis as calculated during the pilot study described in Chapter 3.

Independent T-tests

Question 2 independent t-test. Question 2 of the PHSBA asked students to rate several statements regarding their participation in eighth grade band. The first prompt asked students to rate their enjoyment of band participation in middle school. The other prompts were factors that could lead to the continued enjoyment of middle school band participation. Friends, music, teacher, and difficulty influences during middle school band participation were then rated by the study participants. The last prompt asked for students' intentions of discontinued band enrollment, which was a reversed statement of the first prompt to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire results.

The means of the participant groups and the prompts of Question 2 are available in Table 1. Students rated these elements from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with 4 being neither agree nor disagree. The prompt "I do not enjoy band anymore" was reverse scored for analysis purposes. Question 2 inquired about students' experiences in middle school band. An independent t-test was conducted on the data from Question 2 of the PHSBA. The two groups were determined from the prompt 1 of Question 7, "Do you intend on continuing participation in band during high school?" The results indicated several statistically significant differences between the groups' means. This is indicated by Table 1 below. The table also indicates between which groups the significant differences occurred.

Table 1. Question 2 Descriptive Statistics.

Prompt	Mean (I intend on continuing band) <i>n</i> = 169	Mean (I do not intend on continuing band) <i>n</i> = 88
“I have enjoyed participating in band”	6.31*	5.48*
“I joined band to be with my friends”	4.04	4.45
“Learning about music is why I joined band”	5.11*	4.02*
“The band teacher is a big reason I’m in band”	4.78	4.57
“I enjoy the challenge in learning music in band”	5.72*	4.30*
“I do not enjoy band anymore” (R)	6.18*	4.38*

(R) indicates reverse coding, * $p < .05$ between groups

Statistically significant differences were noted between several prompts and the groups of intended band enrollment. Levene’s Equality of Variances test was statistically significant between the two groups; therefore the adjusted degrees of freedom were calculated. There was a statistically significant difference between the means of the groups intending to continue participation in band and the prompt “I have enjoyed participating in band,” $t(145.80) = 3.95, p < .001$. Other statistically significant prompts when comparing the means of the groups of intended participation in band included “Learning about music is why I joined band,” $t(147.976) = 4.38, p < .001$, “I enjoy the challenge in learning music in band,” $t(144.909) = 5.49, p < .001$ and “I do not enjoy band anymore,” $t(137.936) = 6.87, p < .001$. These statistically significant differences indicate that there is a difference between the groups of intended band enrollment and their ratings of these prompts. There was no statistically significant difference between the intended band enrollment groups and the prompt “I joined band for my friends.” This conflicts with

previous research indicating friendships were a significant reason students joined band in middle school (Morrison, 2001; Rudaitis, 1996; Warnock, 2005).

The results of the independent t-test of Question 2 indicated differences between the groups of middle school students' intending to continue participation in band and the means of the prompts regarding their middle school band experience, the challenge in the participation of music, and the desire of learning music.

Question 3 independent t-test. Question 3 of the PHSBA consisted of prompts that asked about students' intentions and perceptions of continued high school band enrollment after middle school. The first prompt asked for their intentions of continuing band enrollment during high school. The other prompts asked for the students' perceptions of factors related to continued band enrollment, including the fear of bullying, parental influence, band director influence, and friend influence. The final prompt asked for the students' intentions of discontinued band enrollment due to friend influences.

The means of the participant groups and the prompts of Question 3 are available in Table 2. Prompts are ordered from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The prompt "I do not plan on participating in band in high school because my friends are quitting" was reverse coded for analysis purposes. Question 3 inquired about students' intentions and perceptions of the high school band. An independent t-test was conducted on the data from Question 3 of the PHSBA. The two groups were determined from the prompt 1 of Question 7, "Do you intend on continuing participation in band during high school?" The results indicated several statistically significant differences between the groups' means. This is indicated by Table 2 below. The table also indicates between which groups the significant differences occurred.

Table 2. Question 3 Descriptive Statistics.

Prompt	Mean (I intend on continuing band) <i>n</i> = 169	Mean (I do not intend on continuing band) <i>n</i> = 88
“I intend on continuing band in high school”	6.28*	3.00*
“I want to continue band in high school but I do not like being teased about band”	3.60	3.10
“My parents encourage me to continue band in high school”	5.60*	4.36*
“I will continue band in high school if my friends continue”	3.79*	3.00*
“The high school band director has convinced me to continue in band”	4.57*	3.22*
“I do not plan on participating in band in high school because my friends are quitting” (R)	6.33*	4.66*

(R) indicates reverse coding, * $p < .05$ between groups

Several statistically significant differences were noted between prompts and the participation groups. Statistically significant differences occurred between the groups of intended high school band participation and the prompt “I intend on continuing band in high school,” $t(133.231) = 12.82, p < .05$. There were also statistically significant differences calculated between the participant groups and the prompts “My parents encourage me to continue band in high school,” $t(157.176) = 4.92, p < .05$, “I will continue band in high school if my friends continue,” $t(165.867) = 3.18, p < .05$, and “The high school band director has convinced me to continue in band,” $t(198.190) = 5.36, p < .05$. There was a statistically significant difference between the groups of intended participation in high school band and the reverse coded prompt “I do not plan on participating in band in high school because my friends are quitting,” $t(135.796) = 6.31, p < .05$.

The results of the independent t-test of Question 3 indicated the participants' intentions to continue in high school band and the influences of other individuals were interrelated. It is important to note that in Question 3 the participants stated that their friends have an impact on their decision to continue in high school band, whether that decision leads to continued or discontinued enrollment. It was noteworthy that there was no significant difference between the participants' intentions to continue participation in band and the fears of bullying. These results indicate that students' intended decisions to enroll in high school band were influenced by their friends, parents, and band directors. In addition, the reverse scored prompt was consistent with the first prompt "I intend on continuing band in high school," which indicates high reliability between the participants' responses.

Question 4 independent t-test. Question 4 of the PHSBA asked for students' perceptions and intentions regarding participation in the high school band. The first prompt was a restatement of a previous question regarding continued band enrollment in high school. The other prompts asked for students' perceptions of the high school band program, including practice time, activity conflicts, repertoire choice, and continued instrument performance. The final prompt asked students' intentions regarding discontinuing enrollment in band during high school.

The means of the participant groups and the prompts of Question 4 are available in Table 3. Prompts are ordered from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The prompt "I do not plan on participating in band in high school because my friends are quitting" was reverse coded for analysis purposes. Question 4 inquired about students' perceptions of the high school band. An independent t-test was conducted on the data from Question 4 of the PHSBA. The two

groups were determined from the prompt 1 of Question 7, “Do you intend on continuing participation in band during high school?” The results indicated several statistically significant differences between means. This is indicated by Table 3 below. The table also indicates between which groups the significant differences occurred.

Table 3. Question 4 Descriptive Statistics.

Prompt	Mean (I intend on continuing band) <i>n</i> = 169	Mean (I do not intend on continuing band) <i>n</i> = 88
“I want to participate in the high school band in some way”	6.29*	3.33*
“I think the high school band practices too much”	3.12*	3.77*
“I want to try another activity besides band when I get to high school”	4.81	5.24
“I think the music that the high school band plays is fun”	5.89*	4.33*
“I want to continue playing my instrument in band”	6.08*	3.24*
“I do not want to participate in band” (R)	6.37*	2.90*

(R) indicates reverse coding, * $p < .05$ between groups

Several statistically significant differences were revealed through the analysis of these prompts. Levene’s Equality of Variances test was statistically significant between the two groups; therefore the adjusted degrees of freedom were calculated. There was a statistically significant difference between the means of the groups of intended band participation and the prompt “I want to participate in the high school band,” $t(130.479) = 11.94, p < .05$. In addition, the prompts “I think the high school band practices too much,” $t(176.284) = -2.73, p < .05$, “I think the music that the high school band plays is fun,” $t(176.999) = 6.46, p < .05$, and “I want to continue playing my instrument in band,” $t(142.402) = 11.56, p < .05$, resulted in statistically

significant differences when compared to the groups of intended band participation in high school. Lastly, the prompt “I do want to participate in band,” $t(139.036) = 13.65, p < .05$, was a statistically significant difference when compared to the band participation groups and was consistent with the prompt “I want to participate in the high school band in some way.” The single prompt that did not have a statistically significant difference with the groups of intended band participation was the prompt “I want to try another activity besides band when I get to high school.”

The results of the independent t-test of Question 4 indicated that the participants’ intentions to continue in high school band and their perceptions of high school band were important. It was important that there was no statistically significant difference between the participants’ intentions to continue participation in band and the desire to participate in a different activity. These results indicate that students’ intended decisions to enroll in high school band were influenced by their perceptions of the high school band’s repertoire selection, practice time, and the continued study of their instrument.

Question 5 independent t-test. Question 5 of the PHSBA asked for students’ perceptions of the high school marching band. The first prompt asked for students’ intentions regarding enrollment in the high school marching band. The other prompts asked for students’ perceptions of the high school marching band, including its perceived fun, repertoire choice, practice time, and friend influences. The final prompt asked for students’ perceptions regarding the enjoyment of the marching band activity.

The means of the participant groups and the prompts of Question 5 are available in Table 4. Prompts are ordered from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The prompt “Marching

band does not interest me” was reverse coded for analysis purposes. Question 5 inquired about students’ perceptions of the high school band. An independent t-test was conducted on the data from question 5 of the PHSBA. The two groups were determined from the prompt 1 of Question 7, “Do you intend on continuing participation in band during high school?” The results indicated several statistically significant differences between means. This is indicated by Table 4. The table also indicates between which groups the significant differences occurred.

Several statistically significant differences were revealed through the analysis of these prompts. Levene’s Equality of Variances test was statistically significant between the two groups; therefore the adjusted degrees of freedom were calculated. There was a statistically significant difference between the means of the groups of intended band participation and the prompt “I want to be in the high school marching band,” $t(194.902) = 10.93, p < .05$. In addition, the prompts “Marching band looks like it is fun,” $t(143.569) = 6.02, p < .05$, “The music in marching band interests me,” $t(152.934) = 6.19, p < .05$, and “I would join marching band if my friends join,” $t(205.17) = 5.21, p < .05$, resulted in statistically significant differences when compared to the groups of intended band participation in high school. Lastly, the prompt “Marching band does interest me,” $t(161.233) = 6.16, p < .05$, was a statistically significant difference when compared to the band participation groups and consistent with the prompt “I want to participate in the high school band in some way.” The single prompt that did not have a statistically significant difference with the groups of intended band participation was the prompt “I want to try another activity besides band when I get to high school.” The prompt “The marching band practices too much” was not a statistically significant difference when compared with the groups of intended participation in high school band.

Table 4. Question 5 Descriptive Statistics.

Prompt	Mean (I intend on continuing band) <i>n</i> = 169	Mean (I do not intend on continuing band) <i>n</i> = 88
“I want to be in the high school marching band”	5.33*	2.41*
“Marching band looks like it is fun”	5.68*	4.01*
“The music in marching band interests me”	5.67*	4.06*
“The marching band practices too much”	3.73	3.86
“I would join marching band if my friends join”	3.82*	2.65*
“Marching band does not interest me” (R)	5.70*	3.25*

(R) indicates reverse coding, * $p < .05$ between groups

The results of the independent t-test of Question 5 indicated the participants’ intentions to continue in high school band and their decision to participate in the marching and their perceptions of marching band are related. The comparison between the means of the participant groups with the prompt “I want to be in the high school marching band” indicated a significant difference in the intended decision of marching band participation. This was also consistent with the reverse coded prompt “Marching band does not interest me.” The statistically significant differences between the participants’ groups and the prompts “Marching band looks like it is fun” and “The music in marching band interests me” indicated that the perceptions of fun and music selection were elements in determining continued band participation and marching band participation.

Question 6 independent t-test. Question 6 of the PHSBA asked for students’ perceptions and intentions regarding other influences associated with the high school marching

band. The first prompt asked for the participants' perceptions about the marching band and its influence on their decision to enroll in the high school band program. The other prompts asked students about their perceptions of factors associated with the marching band, including trips, competitions, financial cost, and the amount of work required to participate. In addition, the study participants indicated their intended decision to participate in the high school concert band but not the marching band.

The means of the participant groups and the prompts of Question 6 are available in Table 5. Prompts are ordered from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The prompt "Marching band does not interest me" was reverse coded for data purposes. Question 6 inquired about students' perceptions of the high school marching band. An independent t-test was conducted on the data from question 6 of the PHSBA. The two groups were determined from the prompt 1 of Question 7, "Do you intend on continuing participation in band during high school?" The results indicated several statistically significant differences between means. This is indicated by Table 5 below. The table also indicates between which groups the significant differences occurred. Several statistically significant differences were revealed through the analysis of these prompts. Levene's Equality of Variances test was statistically significant between the two groups; therefore the adjusted degrees of freedom were calculated. There were statistically significant differences between the intended band participation groups and the prompts "I want to be in the marching band so I can go on fun trips," $t(186.676) = 4.11, p < .05$, "I want to participate in marching band because of the band competitions," $t(180.471) = 7.85, p < .05$, and "The marching band requires too much work," $t(158.301) = -6.07, p < .05$. The results of the independent t-test of Question 6 indicated that the participants' intentions to continue in high

school band are correlated with other influences involved in marching band participation. It is interesting to note the statistically significance difference of the prompt “I want to participate in marching band because of the band competitions” and the students’ intended decision to participate in high school band. This will be further discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

Table 5. Question 6 Descriptive Statistics

Prompt	Mean (I intend on continuing band) <i>n</i> = 169	Mean (I do not intend on continuing band) <i>n</i> = 88
“The marching band has no effect on my decision to participate in high school band” (R)	3.51	4.09
“I want to be in the marching band so I can go on fun trips”	4.56*	3.49*
“I want to participate in marching band because of the band competitions”	4.93*	3.10*
“The marching band costs too much for my family”	3.19	3.50
“I want to be in concert band but not marching band”	3.06	3.40
“The marching band requires too much work”	2.71*	4.38*

(R) indicates reverse coding, * $p < .05$ between groups

Multiple regression

After completing the independent t-tests within the questions of the PHSBA, additional analyses were needed to gain a broader understanding of how students perceive high school band and the high school marching band. Two multiple regression models were completed using the prompt “I intend on continuing band in high school” and “I intend on participating in high school marching band.” Each regression model was completed twice, once excluding demographic information and once including demographic information.

High school band participation. A multiple regression analysis was performed to predict the effects of several factors on the dependent variable “I intend on continuing participation in high school band.” The results of the regression model with and without demographics information are listed in Table 6.

Several factors were statistically significant in predicting the participants’ responses to the prompt “I intend on participating in high school band.” Parental influence, friend influence, and band director influence were all statistically significant factors that predicted participants’ responses regarding continued band enrollment. This is consistent with the results from the independent t-test of Question 3. The results indicate that band director and parental influences are predictors of continued band participation. Continued instrumental performance, repertoire selection, and the decision to participate in a new activity were statistically significant predictors when predicting the participants’ rating of the prompt “I intend on participating in high school band” when controlling for the other potential influences of band participation. This is also consistent with the results from the independent t-test of Question 4 with one exception. The decision to participate in a new activity was not statistically significant in the independent t-test analysis.

The negative coefficient of male study participants showed an inverse relationship in continued band enrollment when compared to female participants. Therefore, males were less likely to indicate they were planning to continue participation in band when compared to female respondents and controlling for the other modeled characteristics. Additionally, the negative coefficient of the Hispanic study participants indicated an inverse relationship in continued band enrollment when compared to White study participants. Therefore, Hispanic participants were

less likely to continue participation in band during high school when compared to White participants.

Table 6. Models to predict participation in high school band.

Prompt	“I intend on continuing participation in high school band” Unstandardized B / Beta (Standard Error)	
“I want to continue band in high school but I do not like being teased about band.	.141 / .125* (.043)	.139 / .125* (.044)
“My parents encourage me to continue band in high school”	.191 / .160* (.046)	.230 / .196* (.048)
“I will continue band in high school if my friends continue”	.057 / .046 (.049)	.053 / .043 (.051)
“The high school band director has convinced me to continue in band”	.095 / .087* (.048)	.103 / .094* (.048)
“I think the high school band practices too much”	-.028 / -.022 (.051)	-.013 / -.010 (.050)
“I want to try another activity besides band when I get to high school”	-.138 / -.116* (.046)	-.121 / -.102* (.046)
“I think the music that the high school band plays is fun”	.303 / .249* (.058)	.246 / .205* (.058)
“I want to continue playing my instrument in band”	.490 / .458* (.052)	.510 / .476* (.054)
Male		-.412 / -.085* (.178)
Black or African American		.166 / .035 (.182)
Hispanic, not White		.974 / .114* (.341)
Native American/Asian		-.414 / -.042 (.373)
Participants’ years in middle school band		.105 / .019 (.203)
	$n = 282$ $R^2 = .643$	$n = 265$ $R^2 = .678$

* $p < .05$

In addition, there was an additional regression model performed to predict the influence of mandatory marching band requirements on the decision to continue participation in high school band. A significant regression equation was found ($F(1, 280) = 5.40, p < .05$), with an R^2 of .019. The influence of mandatory marching band requirements negatively influenced continued high school band participation ($\beta = -.137, p < .05$). In other words, intended participation in high school band was higher with band programs that did not require participation in the marching band. This variable did not maintain its statistical significance when the additional variables were included in the model.

Marching band participation. Another multiple regression analysis was performed to predict the effects of several factors on the dependent variable “I intend on participating in the high school marching band.” The results of the regression model with and without demographics information are listed in Table 7.

Several factors were statistically significant when predicting the participants’ responses to the prompt “I intend on participating in the high school marching band.” Marching band perceived as fun, the repertoire selection of the marching band, friend influences, and the desire to participate in competitions were statistically significant factors indicating a positive correlation with marching band participation. For example, the decision to participate in marching band increased .289 points for each rank of the perception of band as fun, .189 points for each rank of repertoire selection of the marching band, .149 points for the influence of friends in marching band participation, and .239 points for the influence of marching band competition.

The model was repeated adding factors for the participants’ gender, race, and years of participation in middle school band. The negative coefficients of Hispanic study participants and

Table 7. Models to predict participation in the high school marching band.

Prompt	“I intend on participating in high school marching band”	
	Unstandardized B / Beta (Standard Error)	
“Marching band looks like it is fun”	.348 / .289* (.101)	.486 / .399* (.103)
“The music in marching band interests me”	.246 / .198* (.103)	.146 / .116 (.104)
“The marching band practices too much”	-.040 / -.031 (.060)	-.045 / .035 (.058)
“I would join marching band if my friends join”	.186 / .142* (.064)	.200 / .153* (.064)
“I want to be in the marching band so I can go on fun trips”	-.052 / -.043 (.079)	.012 / .010 (.079)
“I want to participate in marching band because of the band competitions”	.299 / .239* (.085)	.198 / .160* (.083)
“The marching band costs too much for my family”	-.031 / -.024 (.056)	-.075 / -.059 (.054)
“The marching band requires too much work”	-.102 / -.087 (.060)	-.114 / -.096 (.061)
Male		-.185 / -.035 (.218)
Black		.280 / .054 (.222)
Hispanic		-.828 / -.088* .389
Native American/Asian		-1.957 / -.182* (.255)
Participants’ years of participation in middle school band		.042 / .007 (.255)
	$n = 282$ $R^2 = .546$	$n = 265$ $R^2 = .608$

* $p < .05$

Native American and Asian study participants indicated an inverse relationship of intended participation in the marching band when compared with White study participants. Therefore,

Hispanic study participants and Native American and Asian study participants were less likely to participate in high school marching band when compared to White study participants. The factor of repertoire selection was not statistically significant when the demographics factors were added to the regression model. This indicates that marching band music choice is not a factor of participation in the marching band when adding controls for gender, race, or years of participation in middle school band.

Quantitative Conclusions

The results of the quantitative phase identified many statistically significant results; however, these results produced a narrow perspective about students' perceptions of high school band and students' perceptions of the marching band. Student responses to the positively worded Likert-prompts and the negatively worded Likert-prompts were consistent. The influence of participants' friends in middle school was not a statistically significant difference between groups of intended band enrollment; however, the influence of friends was a statistically significant predictor in regards to intended enrollment in high school band without factoring demographics into the model. The influences of repertoire selection, trips, competitions, mentor influences, fun, and the continued learning of their instrument were statistically significant factors in determining continued participation in a high school band program, and in some cases, participation in the marching band. The financial cost of participation in marching band was not a statistically different predictor. The results of the independent t-test and multiple regression models were consistent between the two statistical models. In addition, continued participation in band and participation in the marching band could be predicted when controlling for gender, race, and years of participation in band. Mandatory marching band participation was a negative

predictor of continued band enrollment in high school, indicating that enrollment in high school band was lower when marching band was required for participation in high school band.

The data obtained from the quantitative section of the PHSBA was limited by the forced-choice format of the survey. There was no room for elaboration or clarification. In the qualitative phase of the study, selected participants were questioned about their perceptions of the middle school band experience, high school band, high school marching band, and their thoughts and feelings concerning continued participation in band during high school.

5 QUALITATIVE RESULTS

The goals of the qualitative phase were to gain further understanding of students' perceptions of the high school band, why they chose to participate in middle school band, what led to their decision regarding participation in high school band, their perceptions of the high school band program, and their perceptions of the high school marching band. It was anticipated that these perceptions, opinions, and experiences could inform music educators about the curricular and pedagogical preferences of middle school and high school band students.

Thirteen interviews were conducted with twenty-two participants. Each interview included one or two student participants. The semi-structured interviews consisted of a fixed set of guiding questions with responsive follow-up questions. The guiding questions are listed in Appendix E. The semi-structured format ensured that the interviews covered the appropriate topics while maintaining a degree of consistency. However, the format allowed the participants to control the flow and direction of the conversations.

The student interviewees were purposefully sampled from each school based on the criteria listed previously. Each school that participated in the study, with one exception,

Table 8. Categorization of Codes Used Ten or More Times.

Code	Total
Band is fun	69
Friend influences	45
Enjoy music	43
Learning an instrument	29
Time-consuming	29
Challenge	28
Teacher influence	28
Anxious/intimidation	27
Marching band	22
School requirements	22
Interested in band/music	18
Practice conflicts	18
Music is an outlet/way of expressing myself	17
Parental influence	17
No interest in band due to guidelines/rules	16
Schedule conflicts	16
Sports conflicts/interest	16
Band member conflicts	15
Current music repertoire	15
Enjoy performance	14
Different music repertoire	13
Sibling influence	12
Pressure from making mistakes	11
Band is not fun	11
Friends quitting band	11
Stress	10

contributed two separate interview groups: one of students who stated they would continue in high school band and one of students who stated they would not continue band participation in high school. One participating school could not offer two separate groups due to time constraints and attendance so only one interview was conducted. Schools were selected based on the willingness to participate of the school district, the principal, and the band director as well as the school's location relative to the researcher. Every school that participated in the online survey was represented in the qualitative interview process. Each student asked to participate in the

interview process agreed to do so. The interviews varied in length, ranging from fifteen to twenty-five minutes.

Each student brought their own perspectives to the interviews. These perspectives helped identify major themes that influenced each student's experiences in middle school band, how they shaped their perspectives of the high school band, and how they formed their perceptions of the high school marching band. Each student had been involved in middle school band during the 2014-2015 school year up to the interview, which occurred late in the school year. The qualitative data was analyzed using techniques consistent with grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Methodological triangulation was used to ensure validity of the data between the quantitative and qualitative phases. Methodological triangulation is the process of using more than one method of gathering data to reinforce reliability and validity of the data collected (Bryman, 2011). The quantitative and qualitative data of the study were compared for consistency between the two data sources. The audio recordings were transcribed in HyperTRANSCRIBE. Those transcriptions were then analyzed by coding in HyperRESEARCH.

Coding occurred at the sentence level. After studying and coding each interview, forty-eight codes were identified. As each interview was coded, the data was then analyzed for broader categories and concepts. From these categories, the five major themes were identified. For example, the quote from Rachel, "I enjoy playing music with my classmates," was initially coded as "enjoy music." As more interviews were transcribed and coded, the code "friend influences" was added to describe the quote further. Categories and concepts began to emerge from the data. The quote from Rachel was initially placed into the broad category "friendships in band." The data was moved into the category "band member influences" as the coding and

categorization process continued to be refined. As the coding and categorization process reached saturation, themes began to emerge from the data. The initial Theme 1 was “Personal relationships in band.” It was determined that this did not fully explain the data gathered from the interviews. As the process continued, the theme was further refined. This quote is now found in Theme 1 (Personal relationships with friends and fellow band members) in the following section.

Theme 1: Personal relationships with friends and fellow band members

Every participant stated that personal relationships, both positive and negative, of their friends and colleagues in band influenced their enjoyment of band and their continued enrollment in high school band. These connections were found to be a key component of a student’s perceptions of band as a whole.

Friend influences. The role of the participants’ friends in band participation was important throughout the conversations. Friends had positive or negative influences on continued band enrollment. Many of the participants referenced their friends as reasons for joining or continuing band:

- “The reason I joined band in eighth grade was because of my friends convincing me to do it.” (Jim);
- Ever since 7th grade a lot of my friends were telling me about how much fun band was and I was always thinking about joining in the 7th grade. . .” (Terrell);
- “The reason I am quitting band is because my friends are quitting band.” (Ann);
- “All of my friends dropped out of band because they were bored with it, so I am too.” (Emily);

- “Friends are one of the main reasons I stuck with band . . . well, they are half of the reason.” (Rachel).

Every participant referenced at least one instance where his or her friends influenced continued band enrollment. Some of these influences were positive, such as with Allie, where she decided to join band with her friends. Allie stated, “. . . I had one or two friends joining and I really wanted to learn music ‘cuz, you know, I like music a lot. But my friends convinced me to do it also.” Allie mentioned her desire to be involved in music because of her interest of music, but it was clear from our conversation that her friends played a large role in her decision to join band.

Band member influences. The influence of other people in band, but who are not necessarily friends with the participants, was stated many times. Students enrolled in band had positive or negative influence on those who were in band, even if they had not yet established “friend” relationships with one another. Several students stated reasons for continuing or discontinuing band due to others:

- “I enjoy playing music with my classmates.” (Rachel);
- “The reason I’m not doing band next year is because of the other band members. They are not very trustworthy. . . respect is probably the main problem I have with marching band.” (Rose);
- “Concerts are the most fun because we get to play with everyone and play music together.” (Lauren);
- “Why would I be in here (band) when I have a youth group that I love? The band members don’t care about me.” (Rose);

- “People aren’t that forgiving if you mess up, get all mad. . . these are my classmates.” (George);
- “I just kind of feel pressure to do well. . . sometimes people (band members) aren’t that nice if you mess up, but, it is usually just one or two people. It feels like more when you mess up.” (Sally).

Most of the comments from students regarding fellow band members were negative in context. Several of the students indicated daily hostile environments contributed to their decision to discontinue enrollment in band during high school. When Rose was discussing her reasons for not continuing band in high school, she felt betrayed because of comments band members would make to other band members. Rose stated:

“So, I have a really big problem with respect and so it’s every time I’m walking into a room with the other high school players that are in marching band. . . I wonder what they say about me, and I don’t need that when I can do other things where people don’t talk about you. . .”

Rose indicated her best friend, who was also in band during middle school, elected to discontinue band in high school at the same time Rose was discontinuing participation. The negative atmosphere and camaraderie experienced by these two students was a core reason the students decided to discontinue band participation.

Sally had different concerns than Rose regarding her band peers, but they still resulted in a negative perception of the activity. Sally indicated a culture of shaming when making mistakes in her band classes. Band teachers have focused on the tradition of the large performance ensemble, means-ends pragmatism, efficiency, and obedience rather than music existing for its

own sake (Allsup & Benedict, 2008). This affected Sally because she did not grasp concepts as quickly as other students. Sally said:

“... sometimes people aren’t that nice if you mess up . . . I don’t know if I want to join band because I have problems with memorization and I don’t want other students being mean to me . . .”

Sally experienced fear and shaming due to her mistakes in her performance in band. It was apparent that Sally thought band was focused on performance quality and effectiveness rather than promoting a positive learning environment. She felt that mistakes were condemned and she was fearful of making any mistakes. George reiterated these fears. He believed he could not memorize music well and his classmates did not forgive mistakes easily. However, George seemed open to enrolling in band regardless of these fears, stating, “. . . it looks fun. It looks like you can meet many new people. I only wish we could have some easier music to memorize.” Memorizing music is important to bands, especially marching bands, because of the need to perform complex movements while playing an instrument. It was evident from talking with George that he felt overwhelmed by the amount of music performed in his band class.

The study participants’ opinions were shaped from their interpersonal experiences. Some of these relationships were positive; others were negative. The positive personal relationships usually resulted in a positive opinion of their experiences in band whereas the negative personal relationships produced a negative opinion. The participants’ encounters with others, whether with friends or other participants in the band ensemble, affected other experiences in band.

Theme 2: Fear of not fulfilling academic requirements

Many of the participants cited reasons relating to their school curriculum and high school class schedule for continued band enrollment in high school. This has been an oft-cited issue in music education research. Most student participants stated they saw band as a fun activity; however, the students' perceived importance of the activity in comparison to their high school grades was less than the meaning music educators have placed on the endeavor.

Stress of school responsibilities. One recurring statement from several students was the stress of school and its effect on their decision to continue enrollment in high school band. Students made varying statements concerning the stress and perceived difficulty of high school:

- “I feel kind of intimidated because it’s a whole new planet from middle school and you’ve got whole different classes and new teams and teachers . . . it comes across as a little intimidating.” (Sally).
- “I was at the high school for the AP and Honors meeting. And, they said stuff like ‘you’re going to have to apply yourself and there’s no excuses’ . . . the pressure with the academics and band is too much at times.” (George).
- “The main reason I am probably not doing high school band, at least for the first semester or two, is because I want to take my Spanish early and I want to get ahead with my academics.” (Rose).
- “My parents are afraid it will take up too much of my time from other things that are more important.” (Terrell).

- “If they (directors) would make it to where you didn’t have to be at all of the practices then I would maybe join. I will be too stressed trying to complete my school work and academics to handle band also.” (Stephanie).

Most of the participants, at some point during their interviews, mentioned a concern about the time commitment demanded by high school band programs. Several of the students indicated the primary reason for not participating in marching band was the time commitment required by their high school’s marching band. Selena stated, “I know some people chose not to be in high school band because they practice a lot after school.” However, Alana, who was in the interview with Selena, added, “I like how they practice a lot because it makes the entire band good.” The students’ opinions were divided between the time required to be good in their performance and their stated desire to participate in other activities, spend more time with family, play sports, or work on class and homework. Because of these concerns, several of the students elected to discontinue band in high school.

Some students did not find band important to them, especially when compared with academic pursuits. Naomi stated the reason she felt high school band was not for her was that she does not want to study music in college. During the conversation, it was Tiffany who pointed out that most high school band members did not study music past high school. However, Naomi was convinced band in high school was to encourage the study of music in college. Additionally, Naomi was persuaded that the purpose of high school was to specialize in a chosen career field and to work towards that goal. She felt that her future career prospects were more important even if at the expense of other activities that she may have considered fun.

Time commitment of high school band. The other prominent component of this theme was that students felt the commitment to band negatively affected their ability to complete schoolwork in a timely matter.

- “I understand in high school (band) they want a lot of time commitment but sometimes I feel like they are probably asking too much. If they weren’t as strict about that I would definitely join because I just don’t have that much to give.”
(Alex);
- “I have a bunch of hard high school classes and I don’t have time to be in band in high school.” (Rachel);
- “There is nothing that is really making me not want to be in band. It is just next year and throughout high school my main focus is on getting better and if I was in band it may take away too much time from my homework.” (Naomi);
- “Well, I get home really late. I don’t really have other things to do, but I don’t have time to practice and then I don’t get to finish my school work either.”
(Mark).

Mark indicated he was a dedicated supporter of band in general. His parents both participated in band during middle school and high school. Furthermore, Mark had thoroughly enjoyed band throughout middle school and was looking forward to participating in high school band. However, the time commitment and concern about how it would affect his schoolwork was apparent throughout the discussion. Emily had a unique position on high school band. She stated band would be a lot more fun if it were a class every other day. Emily felt the performing ensemble became boring because it was roughly the same activity, skills, and technique every

day for three years. She suggested having band every other day could help students enroll in more classes that are academic and still gain musical benefits from band.

Student participants indicated increased stress and pressure from increasing academic requirements. The students felt they had to focus on school to increase their academic worth to colleges and universities amid fears of their careers and adult lives. These increased requirements and Honors and AP conflicts have led to decreased participation in elective-based activities, such as sports, the arts, and clubs (Baker, 2009; Sigler, 2015). In the current study, student participants stated academic requirements, the demand of Honors and AP coursework, college requirements, and scholarship needs required more emphasis on their coursework, which led to a diminished desire to continue participation in band.

Theme 3: Influence of family members and teachers

The finding that parents and teachers influenced the students in this study came as no surprise. Teachers and parents had both positive and negative influences on student's perceptions of band in middle school and high school.

Parental influence. Participants stated that the effect, both positive and negative, of parents was important in continued band participation in middle school and high school band. Students mentioned parents participating in band themselves, financial concern regarding the price of instruments, and music participation as reasons students began or continued band enrollment:

- “My parents say that I’m very good at it and they say I’m allowed to quit but I don’t want to, because, if they say I’m really good at this then I must . . .” (Sally);
- “I thought band was, like, interesting, and my family was in band too.” (Ann);

- “The only reason I have continued to stay in band is because my parents wanted me to keep playing.” (Emily);
- “My mom used to play flute when she was in band and that is why I wanted to do it too.” (Alana);
- “Well, in sixth grade I really wanted to join because my mom had played flute and I just wanted to play in band because I thought it would be really fun like she thought.” (Alex).

One commonly cited reason for continued participation in a large performance ensemble was the positive influence and support of parents. Several of the students had parents who participated in band at some point in their life. Alana joined band because her mother highly recommended the activity based on her own experience during school. Band was, as Alana states, “all my life. It’s all I do. And I thank my mom for convincing me to do it.” Alana made it clear her mother’s influence and inspiration drove Alana to participate in band. She chose the flute due to her mother’s influence, enjoyed playing the music in band, and saw band as an outlet to express herself. While she did have friends in band, Alana stated they were not the primary reason she continued in band. She said, “My mom wants me to continue. That’s all I need.”

Ann, however, opted not to continue band participation in high school. Ann had quit band one day prior to the interview. When asked about her parental influence, she said that her parents were the reason she joined band in sixth grade. By the time she made it to eighth grade, she had a negative attitude regarding band and wanted to quit before the beginning of the year. Her parents made her continue band in eighth grade. When her parents finally let her discontinue band in April, she was relieved. Ann “hated band class and didn’t enjoy the music or the teacher.” The

delayed decision by her parents to allow her to discontinue band led to some resentment towards her parents. When asked what her plans were for high school, Ann stated her desire to join chorus because she enjoyed singing more, her friends were also joining chorus, and she thought it was less time consuming than band.

Sibling influence. Siblings who had a positive experience in band could have influenced their family member's decision to continue band participation. Several students indicated relationships that influenced their decisions:

- “Well, like, also my cousins had done band and they said that it was fun.”
(Stephanie);
- “I like band. I’ve been doing it ever since I first saw my sister doing it. (Kiana);
- “My parents and my brother were in band. Watching my brother be in band made me want to do it.” (Mark);
- “My mom and sister were in marching band and convinced me to do it. My sister really influenced me in hearing all of the good about it.” (Lauren).

Siblings who had previously participated in band were a positive influence for their younger siblings, much like any other activity. Mark, for example, stated multiple influences from his parents and brother. Mark observed his brother at Friday night football games, concerts, and competitions throughout his brother's high school tenure; these inspired Mark to participate in band during high school. Kiana was another student who was influenced by her sibling participating in band. Kiana gave specific examples of observing practices and attending concerts as reasons for wanting to participate. She enjoyed band before she became a part of the

band by experiencing the activity as an observer. Kiana stated that without her sister's experience in band, she never would have joined band.

Teacher influence. The influence of teachers was an important factor in a student's perception of band and their willingness to continue in high school band. Students were inclined to continue or discontinue band participation through the influence of teachers and the students' willingness to trust their teachers.

- “My teacher...my chorus teacher, that's what it is called, she recommended that I go into band and I at least try it out for one year. And then it stuck.” (George);
- “I don't like it when the band director isn't here because I really enjoy playing my instrument.” (Michael);
- My band teacher, in fifth grade...she made us do it.” (Selena);
- “Our previous director...just being in class...he was always funny and cheered us up. He made you want to be here.” (Alana);
- “The high school director...I hear they are very strict and they aren't very friendly and it seems like there is a lot of attitudes.” (Selena);
- “My band director is really nice. Being in band puts me in a really good mood.” (Lauren);
- “My old band teacher almost made me quit band because he was so rude to kids, but the new band director is really good. If I wanted to continue band, I would because of him.” (Rose);
- “Teachers should convince students that band is important.” (Samantha).

In an activity like band, students are encouraged to participate, or continue participation, due to the personality of the band director. Other directors can discourage future participation, whether through negativity or poor teaching. One student, Rose, had a very negative experience with her teacher in middle school. Rose stated, “The previous band teacher was very...umm, he was very mean . . . it felt like he only tolerated us. It felt like he didn't enjoy his job.” In cases similar to the one Rose described, the middle school band director forced students out of band. Rose stated one of the reasons she decided to discontinue participation in band was because of the negative experience incurred from her previous band director. Rose said her new band director was more positive, encouraging, and inspiring; however, she continued to have a negative opinion of band due to her first three years in band with the previous teacher.

Teachers also have a positive influence on students. Lauren had her band director for approximately two years before he retired. Lauren said, “We miss him every day. He would tell us jokes, inspire us, and make me want to be there.” During our discussion, Lauren indicated the previous director was the sole reason she was enrolling in high school band. She said that his encouragement for her to continue in high school band led to her decision to continue participation in band. She hoped her high school band teachers would be similar to her middle school teacher in influence and encouragement.

Theme 4: Repertoire selection

The choice of repertoire in band ensembles is a consistent topic in conversations among music educators. Several participants stated strong feelings about the choice of music performed throughout their band experience and the about the lack of input in the decision-making process of choosing music.

Repertoire selection. Participants suggested there was a disparity between band directors and students when it came to choosing music that related to them. Participants discussed their displeasure at the musical offerings chosen by their band directors:

- “High school directors should tell eighth graders what kind of music they play because the music actually matters because some people don’t want to play music that they don’t like.” (Ann);
- “We should play more music that is enjoyable.” (Billy);
- “Sometimes we play a lot of marches and that isn’t really interesting to me.” (Emily);
- “I would like a more popular, more interesting choice of music. That should be a bigger priority.” (Grace);
- “I like learning other songs that are popular and not just what we have to play, but the actual popular songs we have to play and being able to play them.” (Jim).

While there have been many reasons for the overall decline in participation in large performance ensembles (Johnson, 1990; Music for All Foundation, 2004; Strickland, 2010), repertoire selection was one of the reasons stated by the study participants. One student, Emily, provided a specific example of music she enjoyed performing. “We played this Michael Jackson piece once. It was fun, but we don’t do a lot of it.” She indicated the lack of performing music relevant to her was a primary reason she decided to discontinue participation in band. Emily said, “Who needs band when I can listen to music I like on my phone.” She felt no difference between music played on her phone and performed in band. “It is all music to me,” she thought. While the lack of popular music in her band experience was one important reason she decided to quit band,

it was not the only one. Emily also made it clear she did not like the abundance of marches, “old music” as she called them, chosen by her band director. Another student, Grace, suggested current music should be a bigger priority of band directors. “It is what we want to play,” said Grace. She thought she could speak for her peers that students often found band music boring and the students wanted to play music they know. “Music should be interesting . . . most of the time we play our scales and boring music and that’s it,” said Grace. She suggested band directors should listen to their students and incorporate some current music to be played in class. Stephanie seemed frustrated by not having any voice. She said, “Band is a dictatorship.” According to Stephanie, students wanted directors to understand why they wished to perform this type of music, but thought directors ignored the students’ desires. Stephanie felt as though she was not valued as a member, so she decided to join another activity in high school where she may have been more valued.

Student participation in choice of music. The second major component of this theme was the students’ desire to help choose music performed in band. Students who performed in band, and other performing ensembles, wanted to assist in choosing repertoire performed in band:

- “Maybe if you let the kids vote on what type of music they want to play instead of the band director just telling you what you have to play, that might go over better.” (Jonathan);
- “I would like to play some current music, things we hear on the radio, but our director doesn’t ask our opinions.” (Stephanie);

- “We need more common songs and, umm, at my sister’s school, they did this dance routine type thing and they had a lot of fun with it. Our director doesn’t ask our opinion about music.” (Rachel).

Jonathan had decided not to participate in high school band due to a desire to play football. He suggested allowing students to choose more music performed in band as a way to recruit more eighth graders to join high school band. He conceded this was not practical for every selection of music performed by the band, but he felt student ownership in the process of music selection would generate goodwill between the students and the band director. Stephanie also wanted a role in the selection of repertoire in band. She wanted to play current music, but the director never asked the opinions of the students. Stephanie implied that asking student opinions for repertoire selections would be a positive outcome for the students and the band director.

Most of the students desired more inclusion in the music selection process. Students did not want to make decisions for teachers, but students wished to have some level of input. Secondly, students were disenfranchised with much of the music they had performed as a member of band during middle school. Repertoire selection by students was addressed in the recently revised and published National Core Music Standards (2014). The detachment between students and the music performed in band was a major factor in many of the students’ decisions to discontinue band participation during high school.

Theme 5: Mandatory marching band participation

It was clear from the interviews with participants that marching band was an unknown, a fear, and many of the students were afraid of failure when faced with the opportunity of

participating in the marching band. Additionally, participants thought it would have a negative influence on their life and therefore chose not to participate in the marching band in high school. However, the primary topic centered on the prohibitive nature of mandatory marching band in high school band programs.

- “I don’t want to be in marching band because I play football. If I had to be in marching band to be in band, I would just drop out of band entirely.” (Jim);
- “If I had to choose between band and football, I would choose football. I don’t like band as much.” (Jonathan);
- “I could see why smaller schools would say that because if you have a small high school and you wanted a bigger marching band that would be the only way to do it, but I don’t think marching band should be required to be in band. It’s just going to make more kids drop out of band.” (Andi);
- “I think it would be a thing that would help someone stay in band because you can look at them and say that looks really fun and I should join or I should stay in because it’s a fun thing to do after school and all that.” (Tiffany);
- “I don’t think they should make people be in marching band because people don’t like being out there . . .” (Selena);
- “I think marching band should be, like, your decision. Some people just don’t want to do it and that’s their choice.” (Madison).

Few interview participants felt that marching band was a positive influence in transitioning to high school band. Of the 22 participants, only 7 stated they were definitely

participating in marching band, and 12 of the total participants intended to join high school band. The remaining 10 stated they were not joining high school band.

Each participant was asked to describe his or her perception of mandatory marching band participation as a condition for participation in the band program. The responses were pointed and direct – most students were highly against the practice and felt that it was unfair to try to coerce them into doing something they did not choose to do. One student stated,

“Well, I feel like in my situation, it’s kind of like...I still want to do band and if the high school I was going to, like, didn’t let me participate in band if I didn’t do marching band, then I couldn’t do band at all.” (Rachel)

Rachel, along with several other participants, stated that mandatory marching band participation would cause her to discontinue participation in band. The students were resolute, stating that policies such as this are unfair. The interviewees stated that they thought the mandatory marching band policy was prohibitive and hurt the overall high school band program more than it specifically helped the marching band. Rose was strongly opposed to mandatory membership in the marching band as a condition to participation in the band program on any level, stating, “I don't really like that and I'm glad the school doesn't do that because it seems to me like you are trying to keep kids out of band instead of letting them join band.” While educators may not be intentionally restricting student participation, the mandatory marching band requirement was perceived as an unreasonable measure that prevented students from participating in high school band.

Students felt it was not fair to be forced into marching band for the sake of greater numbers, higher quality, or any other administrative reason. Eighth grade band students

perceived high school band participation as their right with no additional requirements needed. Additionally, students raised concerns about the conflicts with sports, family, and school, the time commitment needed, and the difficulty of the marching band. From what was gathered through these interviews, the appeal of competition was not a factor into the students' decision regarding participation in the marching band.

Qualitative Conclusions

Five major themes were identified through analysis of this study's data. These themes describe students' perceptions of high school band and the marching band. The first theme was personal relationships of friends and fellow band members. The second theme was student fears of not fulfilling their perceived academic responsibilities for future success in college and their careers. The influences of parents, siblings, and teachers on continued band enrollment comprised the third theme. Students cited multiple instances of being inspired and motivated by their parents, whether through prior participation in band or support of the arts in education. In most of the cases, students who had supportive parents were more likely to continue participation in band during high school. The fourth theme pertained to repertoire selection in band. The fifth major theme was centered on mandatory marching band participation in high school band programs. These themes are consistent with existing research and lead to implications for practice that will be discussed in the following chapter.

6 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Quantitative Discussion

The electronic questionnaire provided in-depth quantitative data, which produced several important findings regarding continued enrollment of students in high school band and their decision to participate in high school marching band.

Factors that lead to continued enrollment in high school band. Students indicated that the influences of friends, parents, and band directors were important in deciding to continue participation in band during high school. Students also stated bullying was an important factor in deciding whether to continue band in high school. It was interesting to note this finding when bullying is a current topic in education. In previous research, bullying had been an issue with students who participate in activities different from the “norm,” including band and drama (Allsup, 2012; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003). The analysis indicated that bullying is an important factor in predicting students’ intended decision to participate in band. One suggestion is to promote band as fun and “cool” (Morrison, 2001). Students want to feel involved and “fit in” with a social group. Band could fill this space for students. While bullying was addressed in the electronic questionnaire, only one study participant mentioned it during their interview. It is possible that the interviewees did not want to mention instances of bullying in front of their peers or they were hesitant to discuss these cases with the researcher. The analysis indicated that males are less likely to continue band participation when compared with females. This is consistent with previous research regarding males in music performance groups (Elpus, 2015; Freer, 2012).

Students reported that the perceived time commitment of high school band was an important factor in decisions to continue high school band enrollment. The study participants

indicated that those who decided to discontinue band enrollment were more concerned about practice time than those who intended to continue band participation. Previous research has shown that students felt band required too much practice time outside of the school day (Brown, 1985). The student responses of the group who did not intend on continuing band in high school agreed with this assessment. This was consistent between the quantitative and the qualitative data.

The results from the PHSBA revealed other factors of continued band enrollment. These factors included repertoire selection, band perceived as fun, and continued study of instrumental performance. The influence of repertoire selection as a factor of continued band participation was not consistent between the quantitative and qualitative results. While there may not be a single factor associated with intended participation in the high school band program, these were important factors in determining students' desires to continue in band.

Factors that lead to enrollment in marching band. Students revealed several factors that could lead to participation in the high school marching band. Band member friendships influenced intended decisions to participate in marching band. The influence of friends regarding enrollment in band has been cited in previous research (Rudaitis, 1996; Warnock, 2005). When recruiting potential members for marching band, band directors could offer social activities for rising ninth grade students and current members to encourage friends who may want to participate in band. By promoting the social benefits of band to upcoming members of the band program and the marching band, students are more likely to continue enrollment in the band program and participate in the marching band.

The desire to participate in another activity was calculated as a factor when predicting participation in the marching band. While it was not important when compared to continued high school band participation, it was inversely related to participation in the marching band. The data indicates that students were not intending to participate in marching band because of the time commitment needed. This was likely a factor affecting intended participation in the marching band. This data could explain why students viewed the marching band activity and music in the marching band as fun but were still choosing not to participate in the ensemble.

Participation in marching band competitions was an important factor in predicting students' intended decisions to participate in the marching band. This may be related to the area in which the study was conducted and the heavy influence of competition on marching bands. While the quantitative phase identified this as an important factor of marching band participation, the qualitative phase did not reinforce this result. This could have been due to process of selecting participants for the qualitative phase.

Qualitative Discussion

The qualitative data analysis phase identified five major themes – personal relationships between friends and fellow band members, academic requirements, mentor influences, repertoire selection, and mandatory marching band participation. Each theme consisted of several motifs that further explained the students' perceptions of high school band and marching band.

Peer influences. Students indicated friends, colleagues, and peers were important in some way with regard to continued band enrollment. This correlated with the quantitative phase of the study. Rachel stated her friends were, “. . . half of the reason” she chose to continue enrollment in band. She also specified that she enjoyed played music with her friends in band. As

suggested by Deisler (2011), students are more inclined to continue participation in band when they enjoy the activity and participate with friends. Jim did not join middle school band until his eighth grade year, “. . . because of my friends convincing me to do it.” The enjoyment experienced by Jim during his only year in band with his friends convinced him to continue participation in band during high school. This study indicates and reinforces that friends are an important factor in decisions to continue band enrollment. This finding is similar to previous research studies relating to band enrollment (Albert, 2006; Allsup, 2012; Morrison, 2001).

Conversely, the students identified friends in band could have negatively influenced continued band participation in some instances. For instance, Rose decided her classmates (but not her friends) were a negative influence in her life. She was bitter towards band in general due to how she was treated by her fellow classmates. Therefore, Rose and her friends decided to discontinue band enrollment because they did not feel accepted in the group. George, in another scenario, enjoyed band but felt his classmates bullied him and made him feel unwelcome. George added, “People aren’t that forgiving if you mess up, get all mad. . . these are my classmates.” The hostile environment experienced in band was the main reason George decided not to continue band in high school. As referenced previously, students who join band want a place to belong, a safe place, a place with others who are the same as themselves (Adderly et al., 2003; Allsup, 2012). When the students felt unwelcomed by their fellow peers, they indicated that they would join another activity that would better fit their personality. This has been substantiated by previous research (Allsup & Shieh, 2012; Hendricks et al., 2014).

Academic pressure. Students indicated that the tension between academic responsibilities, the high school band program, and the marching band was a prominent issue.

Terrell, who joined band in eighth grade at the behest of his friends, decided to discontinue band in high school because his parents were concerned about the time commitment and its relationship to his academic coursework. George was concerned with band after attending a required meeting about AP and Honors classes at his future high school. George described the meeting as scary, stating the counselors controlled the meeting and instilled fear of failure into the students instead of inspiration. This issue, and his aforementioned concern with bullying, caused George to discontinue participation in band. Band directors should attempt to plan around the academic calendar whenever possible to alleviate the students' burden.

The study participants stated concerns regarding the perceived time commitment required of the high school band program and the marching band. This is similar to previous research indicating students thought that the schedule of a band program was too demanding (Brown, 1985; Brown, 1994). Students overwhelmingly felt marching band would ask too much of their time and would create a situation where they must choose between band and other pursuits, including academic time and other activities such as sports. Naomi suggested she would consider joining high school band, and the marching band, if the practice schedule was lighter. She felt she would have to dedicate too much time to band and lose study time as a result. Students thought that band asked too much of their time during high school and that band programs could reduce the commitment slightly without reducing the quality.

Repertoire selection. Students identified repertoire performed in band as an important aspect of participation in band throughout middle school, high school, and the marching band. This was consistent with the quantitative analysis. Kratus (2007) stated, "Music education must find ways to both keep up with the changing musical culture and preserve the best of our musical

past” (p. 42). Students did not feel as though band directors understood their desire to perform music that is more popular among themselves. The study participants viewed the repertoire selection of band programs as outdated and not representative of their generation. The desire for more popular and current music in the band curriculum was a prominent topic from almost every interview participant.

One of the study participants stated she felt that band directors were not forthcoming regarding the music performed in band. Ann stated, “. . . the music actually matters because some people don’t want to play music that they don’t like.” One of the reasons Ann decided to discontinue band enrollment was due to repertoire that did not appeal to her. The National Core Music Standards (2014) state that the performers’ interest and knowledge, understanding of technical skill, and context of a performance should influence the selection of repertoire performed in music classes. It is clear from the results that the participants were concerned about the repertoire that was performed in band. It seemed the students felt their band directors did not value their generation of music.

Mandatory marching band participation. The eighth grade students indicated that the marching band was viewed as time-consuming, distracting, and overwhelming for incoming freshmen. The vast majority of the study participants stated they would not participate in the high school marching band for a variety of reasons, some of which correlated with the earlier themes. However, the primary concern was with the mandatory requirement that students participate in marching band. This correlated with the quantitative data, where mandatory marching band participation was a negative predictor of continued band enrollment.

Some high school band programs require marching band participation for participation in the overall band program. Study participants did not offer support for mandatory marching band participation. Jim, for example, decided not to participate in the marching band due to football. He would not have been able to participate in band in any fashion if this policy were instituted at his high school. Other study participants stated their concerns regarding this type of policy, commenting that it could possibly lead to lower enrollment in the band program overall. Several participants indicated they would have to discontinue enrollment in the band program if this policy were implemented at their high school. A major finding of this study is that the compulsory marching band participation requirement to enroll in the band program is prohibitive to students and leads to lower enrollment in the overall band program. Further research should be conducted to verify these findings.

Limitations and Research Implications

While this study was conducted in a small area of the southeastern United States, it is possible the views of the student participants were representative of students and band programs across the United States. The problems highlighted in this study are not new problems with bands or instrumental music education. However, this study highlighted perspectives from eighth grade band students' viewpoints that may have been underrepresented previously. In order for band to continue to exist in public education currently into the future, some issues need to be resolved within instrumental music education. These issues include compulsory marching band participation to enroll in the band program, repertoire selection, academic conflicts, peer influences, time commitment required to participate, and bullying.

There were three main limitations to this study as defined in Chapter 3. The generalizability of the study is restricted due to the small geographic region of the United States in which it was conducted. This study should be repeated in another region of the country to determine if the results would be similar. Future research should increase the sample size to increase the power of the statistical analysis. In addition, open-ending questions should be added to the PHSBA to gather a broader perspective of continued high school band participation. Open-ended question questions could be added to each grouping of prompts, specifically questions 2, 5, and 6. This would allow the students the opportunity to convey their perceptions of factors that lead to continued band enrollment and participation in the marching band. The second limitation is the lack of validity for the survey instrument. The PHSBA was created using Justus' 2001 study as a guide. This study should be repeated to determine the validity of the instrument. The third limitation reflects the situational bias of the researcher. As a practicing band director, the researcher brought inherent biases when gathering and analyzing the data. Due to the insider perspective, it is possible that either the participants assumed that the researcher understood the subject matter or the researcher assumed what the participants meant. The familiarity with these issues may have hindered an impartial analysis of the data.

Students who participated in this study were eighth grade band members at the time. Due to the timeframe of this study, the participants were not tracked into high school to determine their final decision to enroll in high school band or the marching band. Future research could follow students' into high school and administer a questionnaire as a pre-test and post-test design. The research study may investigate perceptions of students about the positive and

negative aspects of marching band and their intentions to continue marching band after the first year of high school.

This research study gathered some information about students' views on competitive marching band. Future research could gather data from band directors with a variety of competitive and noncompetitive marching band environments. Such research could gather data regarding enrollment, retention rates, financial cost, staff size, achievement levels, time commitment, and type of activity (co-curricular vs. extra-curricular). The study population could include band directors with different years of experience, varying degrees, and size of marching bands. The study may be comprised of questionnaires and interviews interrogating concerns of philosophy and mission and views of competitive and noncompetitive marching band. This study might, then, serve as a prelude toward one that identifies the effects of differing perspectives of marching band programs on the retention rates of band students in varied types of program structures.

There are two other areas of research that should be explored following the completion of this study. While the previous implications were revealed from the data, there was a larger question – where did the eighth graders get these perceptions of high school concert bands and marching bands? This needs more exploration in future research. Lastly, while the impact of bullying on band students was not clear in this study, it is evident that there was some indication of bullying felt by eighth grade band students. With the death of Florida A&M drum major Robert Champion due to hazing, this issue warrants further exploration in future research.

Practical Implications

Research regarding factors of continued band enrollment in high school is essential for the growth of band education in public schools today. At a time when research has indicated increased music participation has direct and indirect effects on positive student achievement and engagement, music educators need strategies and approaches to improve student retention (Eason & Johnson, 2013).

Band education in the United States is largely the same today as it was when it was introduced to the curriculum in the early 20th century (Hash, 1920; Mark & Gary, 2007). However, education has undergone several major reforms following the 1983 report “A Nation at Risk.” Band education faces the same challenge orchestra encountered in the early 20th century when band overtook orchestra in popularity. Band education must adjust to educational reforms and changing needs of society before it becomes archaic. There are several implications for practitioners that can be gleaned from this study.

The study participants thought that the influences of their peers, parents, siblings, and band directors were important when determining future enrollment in the high school band program or the marching band. Based on the data from this study, the students wanted to be involved in an activity with their friends and valued the input of their parents and teachers. By promoting a cooperative environment between students, families, and band directors, the relationships between these groups may improve. One potential idea is to promote a joint parent/student performance. This could encourage shared music making with the parents and students with the band director serving as the facilitator. Allsup (2012) argued band should be a shared space: a place for moral exercise and growth. An effective way to encourage continued

band enrollment and participation in marching is to offer a safe, welcoming environment for all students. Band educators should attempt to eliminate cultures of shaming and negative classroom interaction between the students and the teacher, while promoting student achievement (Hayes, 2005). Possible ways of supporting student achievement could be through band concerts, activities, and recognition of student achievements.

In addition to promoting a safe and welcoming environment for all students, the planning of social functions and trips with the students in the band program may increase positive attitudes and participation. While trips were not an important predictor of marching band participation, there was a significant difference when comparing the two groups of intended band participation of eighth grade band students. Previous research has indicated that trips are one of the reasons students decide to participate in band (Adderly et al., 2003; Kinney, 1999; Morrison, 2001). One strategy that balances the student desire to travel with the logistical and financial restrictions of modern schools may be to schedule one major trip every other year and smaller social events scattered throughout the year. This way there are larger events to look forward to while maintaining a balance of financial cost and demand.

The students identified a powerful tension between their academic responsibilities and participation in all types of band activities, particularly marching band. Some students decided to discontinue band enrollment due to the perceived conflicts between academics and extra-curricular activities. The student participants were concerned about the amount of practice time required, how it would conflict with their schoolwork, extra-curricular activities such as sports, and time to spend with their family and friends. Band directors should be mindful of the

academic calendar and the time commitment required of students and families when scheduling events for the school year.

Elective courses, including music, art, and drama, often lose high achieving students due to the conflicts with AP and Honors courses (Baker, 2009; Sigler, 2015). In addition, Sigler (2015) stated that students were pressured to drop music courses "...to take AP classes based on what would best serve the interests of the school..." These sentiments were echoed by the participants in this study. While conflicts with AP and Honors courses may not be eliminated, band directors should attempt to minimize the conflicts through healthy working relationships with counselors and administration.

The study participants stated that they felt the mandatory marching band requirement to participate in high school band was unfair to students. In addition, the participants speculated that it led to less participation in high school band programs. While compulsory marching band participation may increase the size of the marching band, it may ultimately lead to a smaller high school band program and decreased enjoyment and quality in the marching band. Change will eventually have to come from within the band director ranks. Administrators, parents, and community members have placed considerable importance on the marching band (Rogers, 1985). Band directors, on the other hand, have felt pressured to spend money to have an excellent marching band. Additional consideration through analysis and philosophical discussion must occur to support these changes in high school band programs. To support these considerations, further research on this topic is necessary.

Epilogue

This topic changed through several years of graduate schoolwork, self-reflection, and experience teaching in public schools. My experiences as a student and as an educator framed my curiosity in this subject. I remember the confused and befuddled gaze students would give me when I would explain that marching band was required to participate in the overall band program. When I began to discover the research already available regarding continued band participation from middle school to high school, I wondered if the reasons would be consistent today as they were in 2005. As a relatively young band director myself, it made me question why we did things this way. Was it because it was the best way to handle things? Is a band program more important than the students who participate? Alternatively, was it because it was how it was always done and no one had questioned the methods?

Band offers so much to many students – music education, leadership, hard work, time management, and more. However, band is not the only option in 2015. Band is one activity among many options that compete for students' time and commitment. Technology has made the consumption and performance of music possible from one's touch. One prominent theme heard from many of the participants is they felt band takes up too much of their time and limited what they may be able to do. While many music educators, band directors, and teachers believe band is more important than other pursuits, the reality is that today's students want to experience different activities during high school. With the reality of the academic pressure faced by students and the multitude of activities students want to participate in, I feel band directors should self-evaluate their programs, the time commitment needed year-round to participate, and

the programming choices of the band to maximize the worth of band to students, parents, schools, and communities.

Music has played an important role in my life since I was five years old. I firmly believe in the band activity as a whole and feel that it contributes in a positive fashion to millions of students across the country and the world. However, are we, as directors, teaching students or are we teaching band? I hope band will continue to be a part of high school programs for the next two hundred years or more. Nonetheless, that does not mean it should remain static. Band should evolve with our students, parents, schools, and communities. Bands should relate to our culture, both current and past. Bands overtook orchestras in popularity at the beginning of the twentieth century for a reason. However, band may in a position where history will repeat itself. Band can be an incredible opportunity for our students if band directors, including myself, do not let our own prejudices, preconceptions, and egos get the best of us. Band could be inclusive, far-reaching, and representative of the 21st century. The National Core Music Standards (2014) address this issue. It is up to music educators to make this happen.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Research Participation Opportunity Student Recruitment Letter

Dear Band Parents,

My name is Adrian T. Gibson, and I am a doctoral candidate in music education at Georgia State University. I am currently conducting research towards the completion of my dissertation. I would like to extend an invitation to your band student to participate in this research study.

I am interested in studying students' perceptions of high school band programs and their perceptions of high school marching bands. The study will consist of a short survey that will be completed online. The survey could be completed in 5-10 minutes of your student's normal band class time. After completing the electronic survey, some students at each participating school will be asked to participate in another section of the research study. These students will be asked to complete interviews in groups of two. This will be about their perceptions of high school band programs and their perceptions of high school marching bands.

To qualify for this study, the student should be enrolled in their school's band class for the 2014-2015 school year.

Your student's anonymity will be protected throughout the study. No personal information will be connected to your student's answers. Your student's teacher will have no access to any individual information from the survey. Also, participation is voluntary – it will not affect your child's grade or any other opportunities in their band class. The answers that your student gives will only be available to myself and my professor, Dr. Patrick K. Freer.

If you are interested in participating, please sign the Parent Permission Form attached to this document. Your student should fill out the attached Child Assent Form. The parent or the student may withdraw from the study at any point.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at agibson18@student.gsu.edu, or you may email my advisor, Dr. Patrick K. Freer, at pfreer@gsu.edu.

Sincerely,
Adrian T. Gibson
Doctoral Candidate
Georgia State University

Appendix B

Georgia State University
College of Education and School of Music
Child Assent Form

Title: Perceptions of eighth grade band students about the high school band program and the influence of marching band on high school band participation

Principal Investigator: Patrick K. Freer
Student Investigator: Adrian T. Gibson

I. Purpose:

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to investigate the perceptions of eighth grade band students about the high school band program and the influence of marching band on high school band participation. You are invited to participate because you are enrolled in band in eighth grade. 350 participants will be recruited for this study. Participation will require approximately 20 minutes of your time. Twenty students will be randomly selected to participate in interviews by pairs. This will require approximately 30 minutes of your time if selected.

II. Procedures:

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete an electronic survey. This survey asks for your perceptions of the 8th grade band experience, high school band, and marching band participation in high school. The questionnaire will be administered electronically. Participants will take the questionnaire in a computer lab on campus. The interview portion will consist of students interviewed in pairs. The interview will be recorded on a digital recorder. All names will be changed for the interview.

III. Risks:

In this study, you will not have any more risks than they would in a normal day of life.

IV. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in research is voluntary. You can refuse to be in this study, and your parent(s)/legal guardian(s) cannot force you. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may skip questions or stop participating at any time.

V. Copy of Consent Form to Subject:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep. If you are willing to volunteer for this research and be audio recorded, please sign below.

Student

Date

Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent

Date

**GSU
APPROVED**

**IRB NUMBER: H15254
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 12/03/2014
IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 12/02/2015**

Appendix C

Georgia State University
College of Education and School of Music
Parent Permission Form

Title: Perceptions of eighth grade band students about the high school band program and the influence of marching band on high school band participation

Principal Investigator: Patrick K. Freer
Student Investigator: Adrian T. Gibson

I. Purpose:

Your child is invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to investigate the perceptions of eighth grade band students about the high school band program and the influence of marching band on high school band participation. Your child is invited to participate because your child is enrolled in band in eighth grade. 350 participants will be recruited for this study. Participation will require approximately 20 minutes of your child's time. Twenty students will be randomly selected to participate in a small focus group interview. This will require approximately 30 minutes of your child's time if selected.

II. Procedures:

If your child decides to participate, participants will be asked to complete an electronic survey. This survey asks for the participant's perceptions of their 8th grade band experience, high school band, and marching band participation. The questionnaire will be administered electronically. Students will take the questionnaire in a computer lab on campus. The interview portion will consist of students interviewed in pairs. The interview will be recorded on a digital recorder. All names will be changed for the interview.

III. Risks:

In this study, your child will not have any more risks than they would in a normal day of life.

IV. Benefits:

Participation in this study may not benefit your child. Overall, we hope to gain information about band programs in schools.

V. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in research is voluntary. Your child does not have to be in this study. If your child decides to be in the study and change their mind, your child has the right to drop out at any time. Your child may skip questions or stop participating at any time. Whatever the participant decides, your child will not lose any benefits to which the participants are otherwise entitled.

VI. Confidentiality:

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. Patrick K. Freer and Adrian T. Gibson will have access to the information you provide. Information may also be shared with

those who make sure the study is done correctly (GSU Institutional Review Board, the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP)). We will use a code rather than your child's name on study records. If your child participates in the interview portion, the student's real name will not be used. The recordings will be kept for five years. The information your child provides will be stored within a firewall-protected computer file. Your child's name and other facts that might point to your child will not appear when we present this study or publish its results. The findings will be summarized and reported in group form. Your child will not be identified personally.

VII. Contact Persons:

Contact Patrick K. Freer at 404-413-5949 or pfreer@gsu.edu if you have questions, concerns, or complaints about this study. You can also call if you think you have been harmed by the study. Call Susan Vogtner in the Georgia State University Office of Research Integrity at 404-413-3513 or svogtner1@gsu.edu if you want to talk to someone who is not part of the study team. You can talk about questions, concerns, offer input, obtain information, or suggestions about the study. You can also call Susan Vogtner if you have questions or concerns about your rights in this study.

VIII. Copy of Consent Form to Subject:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing for your child to volunteer for this research and be audio recorded, please sign below.

Parent or Guardian

Date

Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent

Date

[illegible]

- [illegible]

4. Below are several statements regarding your perceptions and intentions regarding high school band. Please rate each statement from 1 to 7, where 1 is strongly disagree and 7 is strongly agree.

[illegible]

5. Below are several statements regarding your perceptions regarding the high school marching band. Please rate each statement from 1 to 7, where 1 is strongly disagree and 7 is strongly agree.

[illegible]

- The marching band has no effect on my decision to participate in high school band.



○

I want to be in the marching band so I can go on fun trips.

O

I want to participate in marching band because of the band competitions.

OOO

The marching band costs too much for my family



○

I want to be in concert band but not marching band.



The marching band requires too much work.



○

7. Do you plan on continuing your participation in band in high school?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Undecided
-

8. Gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
-

9. Race:

- ☐ White or Caucasian, not of Hispanic origin
- ☐ Black or African American, not of Hispanic origin
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ American Indian, or Alaskan native

If other, please specify:

10. How many years have you participated in band in school, including the current year?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3 or more
-

11. What is your primary band instrument?

- ☐ Flute
- ☐ Oboe/Bassoon
- ☐ Clarinet (any type)
- ☐ Saxophone (any type)
- ☐ Trumpet
- ☐ French Horn

- ☐ Trombone
- ☐ Baritone/Euphonium
- ☐ Tuba
- ☐ Percussion (any type)

Please specify if your instrument is not listed:

Appendix E

Interview Protocol

Good afternoon (name). I appreciate your time today to talk about your eighth grade band experience and your perceptions of high school band. My name is Adrian Gibson and I'm from Georgia State University.

You were invited today because you are currently an eighth grade student in a middle school band. I am interested in hearing your beliefs and opinions. There is no right or wrong answer. I want to hear all sides of the conversation; both positive and negative points of view. Everything you share with me today is completely confidential. I will not share your name with anyone. Please do not share any details of our conversation today with others who will be taking part in the study.

The conversation will be recorded today so I can make sure I get everything that is said in detail. I will be the only person who will hear the recordings and your anonymity will be preserved. Your name will not be used in the study, and your comments will not be associated with your name.

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself. What is your name; the name that you will be using for this interview?
2. What made you decide to be in band in 6th grade/first year in band? Why are you still in band?
3. What are your thoughts and feelings regarding high school band? Do you intend on participating in high school band in some capacity? Why or why not?
4. What are your thoughts and opinions about marching band? Do you intend on participating in the marching band in high school? Why or why not?
5. Does participation in the marching band influence your decision to participate in high school band?
6. What has been the most fun aspect of band in middle school? Has that changed over time? What have you not enjoyed in middle school band?
7. In your opinion, what could be improved about high school bands so that more people would join? If you do not want to participate in high school band, what could be altered or changed about band that may have changed your mind about joining band in high school?
8. In some schools, you have to participate in marching band to be in the band program. How do you feel about that?
9. What would you like for band directors to know about what matters to eighth grade band students who are thinking about joining high school band? What could help them convince students such as yourself to join the band program?

Appendix F

Descriptive Statistics of the Electronic Questionnaire

<u>Prompt</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
I have enjoyed participating in band	6.03	1.56
I joined band to be with my friends	4.17	1.99
Learning about music is why I joined band	4.79	1.84
The band teacher is a big reason I'm in band	4.79	1.89
I enjoy the challenge in learning music in band	5.27	1.94
I do not enjoy band anymore	5.56	2.01
I intend on continuing band in high school	6.03	2.30
I want to continue band in high school but I do not like being teased about band	3.42	2.05
My parents encourage me to continue band in high school	5.16	1.93
I will continue band in high school if my friends continue	3.56	1.87
The high school band director has convinced me to continue in band	4.13	2.09
I do not plan on participating in band in high school because my friends are quitting	5.73	1.97
I want to participate in the high school band in some way	5.21	2.24
I think the high school band practices too much	3.37	1.81
I want to try another activity besides band when I get to high school	4.99	1.93

n = 282

Descriptive Statistics of the Electronic Questionnaire

<u>Prompt</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
I want to be in the high school marching band	4.27	2.50
Marching band looks like it is fun	5.10	2.08
The music in marching band interests me	5.09	2.01
The marching band practices too much	3.81	1.93
I would join marching band if my friends join	3.42	1.91
Marching band does not interest me	4.84	2.47
The marching band has no effect on my decision to participate in high school band	3.71	2.20
I want to be in the marching band so I can go on fun trips	4.16	2.07
I want to participate in marching band because of the band competitions	4.27	2.00
The marching band costs too much for my family	3.31	1.92
I want to be in concert band but not marching band	3.31	2.13
The marching band requires too much work	3.32	2.13
I think the music the high school band plays is fun	5.35	1.88
I want to continue playing my instrument in band	5.12	2.15
I do not want to participate in band	5.17	2.37
<hr/> <i>n</i> = 282		